## Notes/Explanation

This is the first wave of the Taiwan Grand Bargain Affirmative. More materials will be released in future waves. This file corresponds with the first wave of the Taiwan Grand Bargain Negative. When debating this case, students should also make use of the relevant materials from the starter packet (especially as it relates to U.S.-China relations).

## 1AC

### 1AC — Plan

#### The United States federal government should negotiate a grand bargain with the People’s Republic of China by offering to end its commitment to defend Taiwan against Chinese aggression in return for China peacefully resolving its maritime and land disputes in the South China and East China Seas and officially accepting the United States’ long-term military security role in East Asia.

### 1AC — Nuclear War Advantage (Longer)

#### Contention One: Nuclear War

#### First, China is hardening its position on Taiwan. This risks a major crisis.

White 15 — Hugh White, Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, former Intelligence Analyst with Australia’s Office of National Assessments and Senior Official with Australia’s Department of Defence, 2015 (“The harsh reality that Taiwan faces,” *The Straits Times*, April 15th, Available Online at http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/the-harsh-reality-that-taiwan-faces, Accessed 06-25-2016)

It is time to start worrying about Taiwan again.

In the past few years, it has slipped quietly into the background as tensions in the East China Sea and South China Sea have posed more urgent threats to regional peace and stability. But now old questions about Taiwan's longer-term future are re-emerging, and so are old fears that differences over Taiwan could rupture United States-China relations and drive Asia into a major crisis.

Taiwan's status has been a highly sensitive issue between Washington and Beijing ever since 1949, when defeated nationalists withdrew to the island as the communists swept to power in the mainland. The differences were papered over only when US-China relations were opened up after 1972. Taiwan was left in an awkward limbo, neither accepting Beijing's rule nor seeking recognition as an independent country.

Beijing has never wavered in its determination to bring Taiwan eventually under its rule, while America's Taiwan Relations Act enshrines its commitment to support Taiwan in resisting pressure from Beijing to reunify.

In the 1990s, after Taiwan became a vigorous democracy, presidents Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian started to push the boundaries of this status quo, seeking a more normal place for Taiwan in the international community. This infuriated Beijing and escalated tensions between China and America.

These tensions eased when, in 2003, then US President George W. Bush made it clear that the US would not support any Taiwanese push to change the status quo.

After President Ma Ying-jeou took office in 2008, he stepped back from his predecessors' challenge to the status quo, and instead sought to build relations with Beijing, especially by encouraging commercial ties, which have led to the two sides of the Taiwan Strait becoming deeply intertwined economically.

And China was happy to replace sticks with carrots in dealing with Taipei, apparently expecting that economic integration would eventually pave the way to political reunification, perhaps under the "one country, two systems" formula that Beijing applies to Hong Kong.

But that hope received a severe blow just a year ago, when Mr Ma's plans for closer economic links with the mainland sparked massive "Sunflower" demonstrations in Taipei by mainly young people who feared that economic entanglement would lead inexorably to precisely the political reunification that Beijing so clearly wants and expects. Then late last year, Mr Ma's policy of ever-closer economic relations suffered further repudiation by voters in a crucial round of municipal elections.

It is now widely expected that when Mr Ma's term as president ends next year, he will be replaced by a new leader who will be less accommodating to Beijing. While few expect that any future leader from either the Kuomintang or the Democratic Progressive Party will return to policies as provocative to China as those of Mr Lee or Mr Chen, the new leader will almost certainly be more assertive than Mr Ma has been.

That naturally alarms Beijing, and there is a risk that it will respond by taking a tougher line, looking for new ways to pressure Taipei into accepting the mainland's authority.

China's new leadership under President Xi Jinping seems increasingly impatient to resolve what it sees as the last vestige of China's centuries of humiliation and increasingly confident of its growing power to act with impunity. Already there are signs that its stance on Taiwan is hardening.

#### Second, the risk of war will continue to increase because of Chinese military modernization.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

None of the above dangers is new, but others are. China's improved military capabilities may increase its willingness both to start and to escalate a Taiwan crisis. Fifteen years ago, China had little capability to invade or blockade Taiwan. Today it can begin to imagine successfully invading Taiwan, and its capability will only increase with time.63 Much of the concern about China's so-called antiaccess/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy focuses on its ability to reduce the U.S. ability to come to Taiwan's aid.64 In addition to its improved conventional capabilities, China is modernizing its nuclear forces to increase their survivability and their ability to retaliate following a large U.S. counter-nuclear attack.65 Arguably, the United States' current ability to destroy most or all of China's nuclear force enhances its bargaining position in a severe crisis or conventional war over Taiwan. Consequently, China's nuclear modernization may make China more willing to start a crisis, less willing to make compromises once conflict occurs, and more willing to escalate.

#### Third, political pressure in China will continue to grow — the CCP will be forced to act aggressively toward Taiwan.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

A common counterpoint to the argument above is that China-Taiwan relations have improved dramatically since 2008, so the probability of war is low.66 This, in turn, means the expected benefits offered by policies that would keep the United States out of a China-Taiwan conflict have decreased. Although this argument has merit, it is hard to be confident that cross-strait relations will remain good. Taiwan might again elect a more pro-independence government, or China might ramp up pressures for unification. Jia Qingguo, a professor at Peking University, recently wrote: “[P]olitical pressures on the Chinese government when it comes to Taiwan are tremendous and growing. In the past, the Chinese people knew that China was weak and could not stop the United States from selling weapons to Taiwan. Now, many believe that China should no longer tolerate such insulting behavior. Confronted with this mounting domestic pressure, the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] is finding it increasingly difficult to justify its weak responses.”67

#### Fourth, tensions are already rising because Taiwan’s new government refuses to accept the ‘92 consensus.

Reuters 16 — Reuters, 2016 (“China says has stopped communication mechanism with Taiwan,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 26th, Available Online at <http://www.smh.com.au/world/china-says-has-stopped-communication-mechanism-with-taiwan-20160626-gps230.html>, Accessed 06-29-2016)

The Chinese government said on Saturday it had stopped a communication mechanism with Taiwan because of the refusal of the self-ruled island's new government to recognise the "one China" principle, in the latest show of tension between the two.

China, which regards Taiwan as wayward province, is deeply suspicious of Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, who took office last month, as they suspect she will push for formal independence.

Tsai, who heads the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, says she wants to maintain the status quo with China and is committed to ensuring peace.

But China has insisted she recognise something called the "1992 consensus" reached between China's Communists and Taiwan's then-ruling Nationalists, under which both agreed there is only one China, with each having their own interpretation of what that means.

In a brief statement carried by the official Xinhua news agency, China's Taiwan Affairs Office said that since May 20, when Tsai took office, Taiwan has not affirmed this consensus.

"Because the Taiwan side has not acknowledged the 1992 consensus, this joint political basis for showing the one China principle, the cross Taiwan Strait contact and communication mechanism has already stopped," spokesman An Fengshan said.

#### Fifth, any crisis over Taiwan will escalate quickly — nuclear war is likely.

Littlefield and Lowther 15 — Alex Littlefield, Assistant Professor in the Department of International Trade at Feng Chia University (Taiwan), holds a Ph.D. in International Politics from National Chung Hsing University (Taiwan), and Adam Lowther, Research Professor at the Air Force Research Institute at Maxwell Air Force Base, Director of the School of Advanced Nuclear Deterrence Studies at the Air Force Global Strike Command, former Assistant Professor of Political Science at Arkansas Tech University and Columbus State University, holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Alabama, 2015 (“Taiwan and the Prospects for War Between China and America,” *The Diplomat*, August 11th, Available Online at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/taiwan-and-the-prospects-for-war-between-china-and-america/>, Accessed 06-25-2016)

Possible Scenario

While there are several scenarios where conflict between the United States and China is possible, some analysts believe that a conflict over Taiwan remains the most likely place where the PRC and the U.S. would come to blows. Beijing is aware that any coercive action on its part to force Taiwan to accept its political domination could incur the wrath of the United States. To prevent the U.S. from intervening in the region, China will certainly turn to its anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy, beginning with non-lethal means and non-lethal threats to discourage the American public from supporting the use of force in support of Taiwan.

If thwarted in its initial efforts to stop Chinese aggression against Taiwan, the United States may be tempted to resort to stronger measures and attack mainland China. A kinetic response to a cyber-attack, for example, although an option, would very likely lead to escalation on the part of the Chinese. Given the regime’s relative weakness and the probability that American attacks (cyber and conventional) on China will include strikes against PLA command and control (C2) nodes, which mingle conventional and nuclear C2, the Chinese may escalate to the use of a nuclear weapon (against a U.S. carrier in China’s self-declared waters for example) as a means of forcing de-escalation.

In the view of China, such a strike would not be a violation of its no-first-use policy because the strike would occur in sovereign Chinese waters, thus making the use of nuclear weapons a defensive act. Since Taiwan is a domestic matter, any U.S. intervention would be viewed as an act of aggression. This, in the minds of the Chinese, makes the United States an outside aggressor, not China.

It is also important to remember that nuclear weapons are an asymmetric response to American conventional superiority. Given that China is incapable of executing and sustaining a conventional military campaign against the continental United States, China would clearly have an asymmetry of interest and capability with the United States – far more is at stake for China than it is for the United States.

In essence, the only effective option in retaliation for a successful U.S. conventional campaign on Chinese soil is the nuclear one. Without making too crude a point, the nuclear option provides more bang for the buck, or yuan. Given that mutually assured destruction (MAD) is not part of China’s strategic thinking – in fact it is explicitly rejected – the PRC will see the situation very differently than the United States.

China likely has no desire to become a nuclear peer of the United States. It does not need to be in order to achieve its geopolitical objectives. However, China does have specific goals that are a part of its stated core security interests, including reunification with Taiwan. Reunification is necessary for China to reach its unstated goal of becoming a regional hegemon. As long as Taiwan maintains its de facto independence of China it acts as a literal and symbolic barrier to China’s power projection beyond the East China Sea. Without Taiwan, China cannot gain military hegemony in its own neighborhood.

China’s maritime land reclamation strategy for Southeast Asia pales in scope and significance with the historical and political value of Taiwan. With Taiwan returned to its rightful place, the relevance to China of the U.S. military presence in Japan and South Korea is greatly diminished. China’s relationship with the Philippines, which lies just to the south of Taiwan, would also change dramatically.

Although China criticizes the United States for playing the role of global hegemon, it is actively seeking to supplant the United States in Asia so that it can play a similar role in the region. While Beijing may take a longer view toward geopolitical issues than Washington does, Chinese political leaders must still be responsive to a domestic audience that demands ever higher levels of prosperity.

Central to China’s ability to guarantee that prosperity is the return of Taiwan, and control of the sea lines of commerce and communication upon which it relies. Unfortunately, too many Americans underestimate the importance of these core interests to China and the lengths to which China will ultimately go in order to guarantee them – even the use of nuclear weapons.

Should China succeed it pushing the United States back, the PRC can deal with regional territorial disputes bilaterally and without U.S. involvement. After all, Washington invariably takes the non-Chinese side.

China sees the U.S. as a direct competitor and obstacle to its geopolitical ambitions. As such it is preparing for the next step in a crisis that it will likely instigate, control, and conclude in the Taiwan Straits. China will likely use the election or statement of a pro-independence high-ranking official as the impetus for action. This is the same method it used when it fired missiles in the Straits in response to remarks by then-President Lee Teng-hui, ushering in the 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis. The U.S. brought an end to the mainland’s antics when the U.S.S Nimitz and six additional ships sailed into the Straits.

Despite the pro-China presidency of Ma Ying-jeou, China continues to expand its missile force targeting Taiwan and undertakes annual war games that simulate an attack on Taiwan.

China has not forgotten the humiliation it faced in 1996 and will be certain no U.S. carrier groups have access to the Strait during the next crisis. The Second Artillery Corps’ nuclear capabilities exist to help secure the results China seeks when the U.S. is caught off-guard, overwhelmed, and forced to either escalate a crisis or capitulate.

#### Sixth, the U.S. will be drawn-in *in every scenario*.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

The most direct benefit of ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would be a reduction in the probability of war between the United States and China over Taiwan's status. Current U.S. policy is designed to prevent Taiwan from declaring independence and to make clear that the United States will not come to Taiwan's aid if it does. Nevertheless, the United States will find itself under pressure to protect Taiwan no matter what the source of a Chinese attack. Whether Taiwan provoked an attack might be unclear, which would increase pressure for U.S. involvement. Moreover, the United States has limited control over Taiwan's policy, which puts it in the unfortunate position of being hostage to decisions made in Taipei.

#### Seventh, this guarantees escalation to full-scale nuclear war.

White 15 — Hugh White, Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, former Intelligence Analyst with Australia’s Office of National Assessments and Senior Official with Australia’s Department of Defence, 2015 (“The harsh reality that Taiwan faces,” *The Straits Times*, April 15th, Available Online at http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/the-harsh-reality-that-taiwan-faces, Accessed 06-25-2016)

Even more worryingly, this reality does not yet seem to have sunk in in Washington, where leaders still talk boldly about their willingness to stand by Taiwan without seriously considering what that might mean in practice. Any US effort to support Taiwan militarily against China would be almost certain to escalate into a full-scale US-China war and quite possibly a nuclear exchange. That would be a disaster for everyone, including, of course, the people of Taiwan itself — far worse than reunification, in fact.

#### Eighth, *deterrence* and *interdependence* fail — even a conventional response from the U.S. triggers counterforce fears and nuclear escalation.

Talmadge 16 — Caitlin Talmadge, Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Member of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at The George Washington University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016 (“Preventing Nuclear Escalation in U.S.–China Conflict,” Policy Brief — U.S.-China Nuclear Project, February, Available Online at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/china_policy_brief_talmadge_0.pdf>, Accessed 06-24-2016, p. 2)

The Dangers of Nuclear Escalation in the Event of U.S.–China Conflict

Five factors suggest that a U.S.–China conventional war could activate this escalatory mechanism.

First, the United States embraces highly offensive conventional concepts of operations in the Pacific, despite the nuclear pressures these approaches might place on China. A U.S. campaign in a conventional war with China could target Chinese submarines, missile sites, command and control systems, air defense networks, and other sites well inside the Chinese mainland. From China’s perspective these assets may be relevant to China’s assured retaliation capability. Thus what the United States may view as a purely conventional operation might look to China like the prelude to a counterforce strike, creating strong use-or-lose pressures. Indeed, some Chinese statements indicate that conventional attacks on China’s nuclear capabilities could vitiate China’s no-first-use pledge.

Second, U.S. alliance commitments could further exacerbate this danger. The Pacific Ocean may insulate the United States from much of China’s striking power, but U.S. allies, particularly Japan and Taiwan, would be much more militarily and economically exposed in the event of a U.S.–China war. Even if the United States believed it could achieve security through a slower and more limited conventional campaign, U.S. allies might not share that conviction. This reality again suggests that U.S. conventional operations could quickly expand in ways that could appear to impinge on Chinese nuclear capabilities.

Third, the U.S. military’s organizational tendencies also tilt in the direction of a more conventionally aggressive campaign. For understandable reasons, militaries have a well-developed general preference for the offense. Militaries also tend to pursue tactical and operational advantages at the expense of broader strategic and political objectives. Historically this behavior has resulted in a U.S. approach that is very good at general deterrence (preventing the outbreak of war) but less adept at intra-war deterrence (that is, preventing ongoing wars from escalating).

Fourth, civilian control of the U.S. military is unlikely to check these tendencies. Some civilian policymakers may not be fully aware of the potentially escalatory implications of such approaches, while others may actually embrace these approaches. The historical record suggests that civilian oversight of conventional operations with nuclear implications has not always been robust.

Fifth, situational awareness is likely to deteriorate rapidly for the United States and especially China during a conventional conflict, in ways that further compound all of the escalatory pressures just discussed. After all, denying China knowledge of the battle space through the destruction of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets (ISR) and command and control networks is likely to be one of the primary objectives of any U.S. military strategy. These sorts of attacks will be essential to U.S. conventional success but also will make it increasingly difficult for China to feel confident that U.S. aims are limited and that China’s nuclear retaliatory capabilities remain intact. Similarly, the United States may cross Chinese nuclear tripwires without realizing it.

#### Ninth, *mismatched perceptions* make nuclear escalation extremely likely. The risk is high — impact defense is wrong.

Kulacki 16 — Gregory Kulacki, China Project Manager in the Global Security Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, former Associate Professor of Government at Green Mountain College, former Director of External Studies at Pitzer College, former Director of Academic Programs in China for the Council on International Educational Exchange, holds a Ph.D. in Political Theory from the University of Maryland-College Park, holds graduate certificates in Chinese Economic History and International Politics at Fudan University (Shanghai), 2016 (“The Risk of Nuclear War with China: A Troubling Lack of Urgency,” Union of Concerned Scientists, May, Available Online at <http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2016/05/Nuclear-War-with-China.pdf>, Accessed 06-28-2016)

No Technical Exit

As long as both sides remain committed to pursuing technical solutions to their unique strategic problems, they are condemned to continue competing indefinitely. But stalemate is not a stable outcome; rather, it is a perpetual high-wire act. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, the governments of the United States and China are a few poor decisions away from starting a war that could escalate rapidly and end in a nuclear exchange.

Lack of mutual trust and a growing sense that their differences may be irreconcilable incline both governments to continue looking for military solutions—for new means of coercion that help them feel more secure. Establishing the trust needed to have confidence in diplomatic resolutions to the disagreements, animosities, and suspicions that have troubled leaders of the United States and the PRC for almost 70 years is extremely difficult when both governments take every new effort to up the technological ante as an act of bad faith.

The bilateral dialogues on strategic stability aim to manage the military competition, but they do not seek to end it. Although the two governments work very hard at avoiding conflict, they have yet to find a way out of what Graham Allison called their “Thucydides trap”—the risk of conflict between a rising power and an established power invested in the status quo (Allison 2015). Allison’s warning not to minimize the risks of war is sage advice, even if he does not say how the United States and China can escape the trap he describes. [end page 8]

PRC leaders believe it is possible to prosecute a major war without risking a U.S. nuclear attack. The leaders of the United States believe stopping the PRC from prosecuting such a war may depend, in certain contingencies, on a credible threat to use nuclear weapons—a threat U.S. leaders state they are prepared to execute. These mismatched perceptions increase both the possibility of war and the likelihood it will result in the use of nuclear weapons.

Well-informed U.S. officials tend to dismiss the possibility that the United States and the PRC could wander into a nuclear war. For example, Admiral Dennis Blair, a former Director of National Intelligence whose final military post was Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, assured a large gathering of U.S. arms-control experts that “the chances of a nuclear exchange between the United States and China are somewhere between nil and zero.” J. Stapleton Roy, a former U.S. ambassador to the PRC, wholeheartedly agreed (Swaine, Blair, and Roy 2015). Similarly, PRC military strategists and arms control experts believe that the risk of nuclear war with the United States is not an urgent concern even if that risk may not be zero (Cunningham and Fravel 2015).

This lack of urgency is troubling. For example, the United States reportedly told the PRC it would risk military escalation to prevent or stop a proposed PRC island reclamation project in the Scarborough Shoal (Cooper and Douglas 2016). The PRC reportedly responded by committing to move ahead with the project later in 2016 (Chan 2016). This particular contest of wills is part of a steadily increasing number of unresolved diplomatic spats that have escalated to the level of overt military posturing reminiscent of U.S.-Soviet jousting during the Cold War.

The United States and the PRC are decades-old enemies, preparing for war and armed with nuclear weapons. Good faith efforts by the leaders of both nations have failed to stop accelerating preparations for war, including new investments in their nuclear forces. Miscommunication, misunderstanding, or poor judgment could spark a conflict that both governments may find difficult to stop.

War between the United States and the People’s Republic of China is not inevitable, but failing to acknowledge the risks is certain to make it more likely. Both governments should confront these risks with a greater sense of purpose. Only then will they devote the same measure of creativity, effort, and resources to the diplomacy of reducing those risks as they now spend preparing for war.

#### Tenth, tensions over Taiwan are the root cause of other regional tensions. A grand bargain would eliminate the most likely scenarios for major war.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“Time for a U.S.-China Grand Bargain,” Belfer Center Policy Brief, July, Available Online at <http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/files/glaser-us-china-jul15-final.pdf>, Accessed 06-24-2016, p. 2)

Reevaluating The U.S. Commitment To Taiwan

China’s rise poses difficult challenges for the United States. If military competition and political frictions continue to intensify, the United States could find itself engaged in a new cold war. China has long made clear that unification with Taiwan is a paramount political and security goal. The United States is currently committed to defending Taiwan if China launches an unprovoked attack. This commitment is a deep source of Chinese distrust of, and tension with, the United States. Consequently, the United States should consider ending this commitment. Doing so would have both benefits and costs.

Benefits. Eliminating the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would have three main benefits. First, it would reduce the probability of war between the United States and China over Taiwan. China’s improved military capabilities are reducing the United States’ ability to come to Taiwan’s aid in the event of a challenge from Beijing. These capabilities, combined with China’s expectation of growing regional influence, may lead China to decide to seek reunification with Taiwan through military means. Second, U.S. support for Taiwan may be the most important policy-driven source of China’s suspicions about U.S. motives and intentions in East Asia. Consequently, ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan has the potential to dramatically improve U.S.-China relations. Third, terminating this commitment could also greatly moderate the intensifying military competition between the United States and China. Much of China’s military modernization, including its growing capability to control the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the South China and East China Seas, is dedicated to defending Taiwan. The United States has devised a concept, widely known as AirSea Battle, to counter China’s increasing capabilities and maintain dominance of these SLOCs. Ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would eliminate the scenario most likely to draw the United States into a large war with China, thus reducing the importance that China places on controlling these SLOCs and helping to significantly moderate U.S.-China competition.

#### Eleventh, only the plan can resolve the security dilemma — Taiwan is key.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

Second, ending the U.S. commitment to defend Taiwan could greatly moderate the intensifying military competition between the United States and China, which is adding to strains in their relationship.72 Most directly, the United States is developing its AirSea Battle concept to counter China's A2/AD capabilities, which are intended primarily to undermine the U.S. ability to come to Taiwan's aid.73 The impact of the U.S. commitment to Taiwan on China's military requirements and capabilities, however, arguably reaches much further. China worries that in a conflict over Taiwan the United States will interrupt its SLOCs. This vulnerability would leave China open to U.S. coercion during severe crises and conventional wars.74 The United States dominates the SLOCs from the Persian Gulf to the Strait of Malacca and still enjoys significant military advantages in the South China and East China Seas. The requirement for both China and the United States to control these SLOCs during a crisis or war creates a security dilemma, which adds to strains in the U.S.-China relationship. There is no military-technical solution to this security dilemma, however, because two countries cannot control the same space.75

A decision by the United States to end its commitment to Taiwan could moderate this security dilemma in two important ways. By eliminating the scenario that is most likely to bring the United States and China into a large war, accommodation should significantly reduce the importance that China places on controlling its SLOCs. Although China would likely still find U.S. control undesirable, the military threat the United States posed to China's security would be greatly reduced. In addition, as explained above, U.S. accommodation could signal that U.S. goals in the region are limited, which should contribute to improving the U.S.-China relationship by increasing China's assessment that U.S. motives are benign, which would in turn further reduce the severity of the security dilemma.76

#### Twelfth, there’s no other solution — the U.S. will inevitably be forced to give up Taiwan. Until then, it’s the biggest flashpoint for escalatory superpower conflict.

Mearsheimer 14 — John J. Mearsheimer, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Program on International Security Policy at the University of Chicago, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Cornell University, 2014 (“Say Goodbye to Taiwan,” *The National Interest*, March/April, Available Online at <http://nationalinterest.org/article/say-goodbye-taiwan-9931?page=show>, Accessed 06-28-2016)

There is a second reason the United States might eventually forsake Taiwan: it is an especially dangerous flashpoint, which could easily precipitate a Sino-American war that is not in America’s interest. U.S. policy makers understand that the fate of Taiwan is a matter of great concern to Chinese of all persuasions and that they will be extremely angry if it looks like the United States is preventing unification. But that is exactly what Washington will be doing if it forms a close military alliance with Taiwan, and that point will not be lost on the Chinese people.

It is important to note in this regard that Chinese nationalism, which is a potent force, emphasizes how great powers like the United States humiliated China in the past when it was weak and appropriated Chinese territory like Hong Kong and Taiwan. Thus, it is not difficult to imagine crises breaking out over Taiwan or scenarios in which a crisis escalates into a shooting war. After all, Chinese nationalism will surely be a force for trouble in those crises, and China will at some point have the military wherewithal to conquer Taiwan, which will make war even more likely.

There was no flashpoint between the superpowers during the Cold War that was as dangerous as Taiwan will be in a Sino-American security competition. Some commentators liken Berlin in the Cold War to Taiwan, but Berlin was not sacred territory for the Soviet Union and it was actually of little strategic importance for either side. Taiwan is different. Given how dangerous it is for precipitating a war and given the fact that the United States will eventually reach the point where it cannot defend Taiwan, there is a reasonable chance that American policy makers will eventually conclude that it makes good strategic sense to abandon Taiwan and allow China to coerce it into accepting unification.

#### Thirteenth, U.S.-China war immediately kills millions — and the fallout would destroy the planet.

Wittner 11 — Lawrence S. Wittner, Emeritus Professor of History at the State University of New York at Albany, holds a Ph.D. in History from Columbia University, 2011 (“Is a Nuclear War with China Possible?,” *Huntington News*, November 28th, Available Online at http://www.huntingtonnews.net/14446, Accessed 02-07-2013)

While nuclear weapons exist, there remains a danger that they will be used. After all, for centuries national conflicts have led to wars, with nations employing their deadliest weapons. The current deterioration of U.S. relations with China might end up providing us with yet another example of this phenomenon.

The gathering tension between the United States and China is clear enough. Disturbed by China’s growing economic and military strength, the U.S. government recently challenged China’s claims in the South China Sea, increased the U.S. military presence in Australia, and deepened U.S. military ties with other nations in the Pacific region. According to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the United States was “asserting our own position as a Pacific power.”

But need this lead to nuclear war?

Not necessarily. And yet, there are signs that it could. After all, both the United States and China possess large numbers of nuclear weapons. The U.S. government threatened to attack China with nuclear weapons during the Korean War and, later, during the conflict over the future of China’s offshore islands, Quemoy and Matsu. In the midst of the latter confrontation, President Dwight Eisenhower declared publicly, and chillingly, that U.S. nuclear weapons would “be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.”

Of course, China didn’t have nuclear weapons then. Now that it does, perhaps the behavior of national leaders will be more temperate. But the loose nuclear threats of U.S. and Soviet government officials during the Cold War, when both nations had vast nuclear arsenals, should convince us that, even as the military ante is raised, nuclear saber-rattling persists.

Some pundits argue that nuclear weapons prevent wars between nuclear-armed nations; and, admittedly, there haven’t been very many—at least not yet. But the Kargil War of 1999, between nuclear-armed India and nuclear-armed Pakistan, should convince us that such wars can occur. Indeed, in that case, the conflict almost slipped into a nuclear war. Pakistan’s foreign secretary threatened that, if the war escalated, his country felt free to use “any weapon” in its arsenal. During the conflict, Pakistan did move nuclear weapons toward its border, while India, it is claimed, readied its own nuclear missiles for an attack on Pakistan.

At the least, though, don’t nuclear weapons deter a nuclear attack? Do they? Obviously, NATO leaders didn’t feel deterred, for, throughout the Cold War, NATO’s strategy was to respond to a Soviet conventional military attack on Western Europe by launching a Western nuclear attack on the nuclear-armed Soviet Union. Furthermore, if U.S. government officials really believed that nuclear deterrence worked, they would not have resorted to championing “Star Wars” and its modern variant, national missile defense. Why are these vastly expensive—and probably unworkable—military defense systems needed if other nuclear powers are deterred from attacking by U.S. nuclear might?

Of course, the bottom line for those Americans convinced that nuclear weapons safeguard them from a Chinese nuclear attack might be that the U.S. nuclear arsenal is far greater than its Chinese counterpart. Today, it is estimated that the U.S. government possesses over five thousand nuclear warheads, while the Chinese government has a total inventory of roughly three hundred. Moreover, only about forty of these Chinese nuclear weapons can reach the United States. Surely the United States would “win” any nuclear war with China.

But what would that “victory” entail? A nuclear attack by China would immediately slaughter at least 10 million Americans in a great storm of blast and fire, while leaving many more dying horribly of sickness and radiation poisoning. The Chinese death toll in a nuclear war would be far higher. Both nations would be reduced to smoldering, radioactive wastelands. Also, radioactive debris sent aloft by the nuclear explosions would blot out the sun and bring on a “nuclear winter” around the globe—destroying agriculture, creating worldwide famine, and generating chaos and destruction.

Moreover, in another decade the extent of this catastrophe would be far worse. The Chinese government is currently expanding its nuclear arsenal, and by the year 2020 it is expected to more than double its number of nuclear weapons that can hit the United States. The U.S. government, in turn, has plans to spend hundreds of billions of dollars “modernizing” its nuclear weapons and nuclear production facilities over the next decade.

To avert the enormous disaster of a U.S.-China nuclear war, there are two obvious actions that can be taken. The first is to get rid of nuclear weapons, as the nuclear powers have agreed to do but thus far have resisted doing. The second, conducted while the nuclear disarmament process is occurring, is to improve U.S.-China relations. If the American and Chinese people are interested in ensuring their survival and that of the world, they should be working to encourage these policies.

#### Fourteenth, even a “limited” nuclear war would cause global devastation that kills billions and risks extinction — consensus of scientific studies.

Helfand 13 — Ira Helfand, Co-President of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Past President of Physicians for Social Responsibility, Internist and Emergency Medicine Physician practicing at the Family Care Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, holds degrees from Harvard College and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, 2013 (“The Humanitarian Consequences Of Nuclear War,” *Arms Control Today*, November 4th, Available Online at <https://www.armscontrol.org/print/6021>, Accessed 06-29-2016)

This task is particularly urgent in view of the new data that have emerged over the last few years. This information indicates that even a very limited nuclear war, confined to one region of the globe, would have devastating effects worldwide.

In 2006, climatologist Alan Robock; Brian Toon, a professor of atmospheric and oceanic sciences; and four colleagues examined the consequences of a potential limited nuclear war between India and Pakistan.[1] They chose to examine the effects of this scenario because of the two countries’ long history of conflict and the ongoing risk of a nuclear exchange. India and Pakistan have fought three wars since they gained independence in 1947 and have come close to war twice when armed with nuclear weapons. During one crisis in the 1990s, it was reported that Pakistani planes armed with nuclear bombs were kept on the runway with their engines running 24 hours a day so they would be ready for takeoff on a few minutes’ notice.[2] It is easy to imagine events, such as an increase in tension over the disputed territories in Kashmir or another terrorist attack like those at the Indian parliament in 2001 or in Mumbai in 2008, that could escalate into full-scale warfare and the use of nuclear weapons.

In their study, Robock and Toon assumed that each country used 50 nuclear bombs, each with an explosive power of 15 kilotons—the power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945—against urban targets in the other country. The weapons involved represent less than one-half of the current Indian and Pakistani arsenals and less than 0.5 percent of the world’s nuclear arsenals. The local effects were devastating: 20 million dead in the first week from blast effects, burns, and acute radiation exposure. Even more disturbing were their findings concerning the far-reaching disruption to global climate conditions that this conflict would cause.

The scientists found that the firestorms generated by these nuclear explosions would loft about 5 million tons of black soot high into the atmosphere. The soot would block out sunlight, dropping surface temperatures across the planet by an average of 1.3 degrees Celsius. The cooling would be much more severe in the internal regions of the major continents, shortening the growing season in areas where much of the world’s grain is produced. In addition, the cooling would lower total precipitation worldwide as less water evaporated from the oceans to fall back as rain or snow, and there would be significant changes in precipitation patterns.

Further, by heating the upper atmosphere, the soot particles would cause a major decrease in stratospheric ozone. By allowing substantially more ultraviolet light to reach the earth’s surface, this would further reduce crop yields. The soot particles would be injected so high in the atmosphere that they would not be washed out by rainfall. Their effects would persist for a full decade until they gradually settled back to earth.

The climate disruption predicted by the Robock-Toon study has been independently confirmed in separate studies done by climatologists Michael Mills2 and Andrea Stenke,[3] each of whom considered the same limited war scenario but used a different climate model.

In the last two years, a number of studies have attempted to look at the effect this climate disruption would have on food production. Environmental scientist Mutlu Özdogan looked at soybean production and corn production in the U.S. Corn Belt and found an average decline of 7 percent in soybean production and 12 percent in corn production in the decade following a limited war in South Asia.[4] Crop specialist Lili Xia and Robock examined the impact on middle-season rice production in China and found a 15 percent decline from the prewar level for the 10 years following this conflict.[5]

The world is not prepared to deal with this kind of significant decline in food production. World grain reserves amount to less than 70 days of consumption and would not offer a significant buffer against a sharp and sustained reduction in grain harvests.[6] In addition, 870 million people in the world today already are malnourished.[7] They receive less than the 1,800 calories per day required for the average adult to maintain his or her body mass and do a small amount of physical work to gather or grow food. Even a 10 or 15 percent decline from these levels of food consumption, sustained over a full decade, would be catastrophic. The decline in food consumption, however, probably would be much larger than the decline in food production. Market forces would magnify the impact with large rises in food prices, making even the available food inaccessible to the poor, who are already malnourished precisely because they cannot afford enough food at current prices.

Furthermore, some 300 million people live in countries where, although most people enjoy adequate nutrition today, much of the food is imported. Most of the countries of North Africa and the Middle East and many of the wealthy industrial countries of East Asia, including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, fall into this category. In the face of significant declines in food production, it is probable that grain-exporting countries would suspend exports. This has happened repeatedly, for limited periods of time, over the last decade in response to local crop shortfalls. Thus, these 300 million people also would face severe food insecurity.

In April 2012, at the Nobel Peace Laureates Summit in Chicago, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and its U.S. affiliate, Physicians for Social Responsibility, released a report, “Nuclear Famine,” examining this potential catastrophe.[8] The report concluded that more than one billion people might starve as a result of a limited, regional nuclear war.

Since then, Xia and Robock have generated new data examining the impact of a limited nuclear war in South Asia on grain crops other than rice in China. Their findings, which will be published later this year, show that these other grains are affected much more severely than rice. In particular, production of the second-largest grain crop, winter wheat, is projected to fall 31 percent.

These new findings suggest that the “Nuclear Famine” report may have seriously underestimated the extent of the catastrophe that would follow a regional nuclear conflict and that arms control advocates need to fundamentally rethink their assumptions about limited nuclear war. The report assumed that China, along with most of the rest of the industrial world, would be spared actual famine. The latest studies suggest that there might be widespread starvation in China, putting another 1.3 billion people at risk. At the very least, the predicted food shortfalls would create a decade of severe economic and social instability in China, which is the largest country in the world and has the world’s second-largest and most dynamic economy. China also has a large nuclear arsenal of its own, estimated to be nearly 300 warheads, about 50 to 75 of which are deliverable by land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles.

There are no simulations examining whether there will be similar shortfalls in other temperate-zone grain producers such as Canada, Russia, the United States, and Europe except for Özdogan’s study of corn and soybeans in the United States. In the absence of such studies, it seems prudent to assume that these countries might well suffer the same major food shortages that are now predicted for China.

Regional War, Global Impact

In the 1980s, there was a general understanding that large-scale nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union would be a disaster, not just for those countries but for the whole planet.[9] From the studies described above, it is clear that even a much more limited nuclear war would be a global catastrophe, with severe humanitarian consequences extending far beyond the countries directly involved in the conflict.

These findings have significant implications for nuclear weapons policy choices in South Asia and for the policies of other states toward India and Pakistan. Yet, the issue extends well beyond South Asia. The arsenals of China, France, Israel, and the United Kingdom are all capable of causing the same or greater degrees of climate disruption.

More worrisome are the arsenals of the nuclear superpowers. Each U.S. Trident submarine can carry 96 warheads, each of which is 10 to 30 times more powerful than the weapons that were considered in the South Asia study. That means that each of these submarines can cause this nuclear famine scenario many times over. The United States has 14 of them, as well as an arsenal of land-based missiles and a fleet of strategic bombers armed with cruise missiles and gravity bombs. The Russian arsenal has a similar degree of overkill capacity.

The danger of nuclear war is often dismissed as a low-probability event and therefore not a cause for concern. The vast majority of the population, including people who were intensely aware of the nuclear danger during the Cold War, behaves as if this were true. Yet, the danger of nuclear war did not go away when the Berlin Wall came down. The arsenals remain, and the chance of nuclear war is not at all remote. As the number of nuclear-armed states increases, especially as nuclear arsenals grow in areas of chronic and seemingly intractable conflict, such as South Asia and the Middle East, the danger becomes even greater.

The possibility of war between the nuclear superpowers also still exists. Even if the likelihood of a deliberate nuclear war between the United States and Russia has declined, there remains the very real possibility of an accidental nuclear war. There have been at least five incidents since 1979 in which Moscow or Washington was prepared to start a nuclear war in the mistaken belief that it was already under attack by the other side.[10] The most recent known incident occurred in January 1995, a full five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The conditions that existed then have not changed fundamentally.

Human error, a computer failure, or perhaps a cyberattack launched by a terrorist group all could lead to the unintended launch of nuclear weapons. The new understanding of the climatic consequences of nuclear war makes it clear that even a very limited use of these weapons would be disastrous.

#### Finally, nuclear war is the *number one existential risk* — the case outweighs.

Sandberg 14 — Anders Sandberg, James Martin Research Fellow at the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University, holds a Ph.D. in Computational Neuroscience from Stockholm University, 2014 (“The Five Biggest Threats To Human Existence,” *Popular Science*, May 29th, Available Online at <http://www.popsci.com/article/science/five-biggest-threats-human-existence>, Accessed 10-07-2014)

In the daily hubbub of current “crises” facing humanity, we forget about the many generations we hope are yet to come. Not those who will live 200 years from now, but 1,000 or 10,000 years from now. I use the word “hope” because we face risks, called existential risks, that threaten to wipe out humanity. These risks are not just for big disasters, but for the disasters that could end history.

Not everyone has ignored the long future though. Mystics like Nostradamus have regularly tried to calculate the end of the world. HG Wells tried to develop a science of forecasting and famously depicted the far future of humanity in his book The Time Machine. Other writers built other long-term futures to warn, amuse or speculate.

But had these pioneers or futurologists not thought about humanity’s future, it would not have changed the outcome. There wasn’t much that human beings in their place could have done to save us from an existential crisis or even cause one.

We are in a more privileged position today. Human activity has been steadily shaping the future of our planet. And even though we are far from controlling natural disasters, we are developing technologies that may help mitigate, or at least, deal with them.

Future imperfect

Yet, these risks remain understudied. There is a sense of powerlessness and fatalism about them. People have been talking apocalypses for millennia, but few have tried to prevent them. Humans are also bad at doing anything about problems that have not occurred yet (partially because of the availability heuristic – the tendency to overestimate the probability of events we know examples of, and underestimate events we cannot readily recall).

If humanity becomes extinct, at the very least the loss is equivalent to the loss of all living individuals and the frustration of their goals. But the loss would probably be far greater than that. Human extinction means the loss of meaning generated by past generations, the lives of all future generations (and there could be an astronomical number of future lives) and all the value they might have been able to create. If consciousness or intelligence are lost, it might mean that value itself becomes absent from the universe. This is a huge moral reason to work hard to prevent existential threats from becoming reality. And we must not fail even once in this pursuit.

With that in mind, I have selected what I consider the five biggest threats to humanity’s existence. But there are caveats that must be kept in mind, for this list is not final.

Over the past century we have discovered or created new existential risks – supervolcanoes were discovered in the early 1970s, and before the Manhattan project nuclear war was impossible – so we should expect others to appear. Also, some risks that look serious today might disappear as we learn more. The probabilities also change over time – sometimes because we are concerned about the risks and fix them.

Finally, just because something is possible and potentially hazardous, doesn’t mean it is worth worrying about. There are some risks we cannot do anything at all about, such as gamma ray bursts that result from the explosions of galaxies. But if we learn we can do something, the priorities change. For instance, with sanitation, vaccines and antibiotics, pestilence went from an act of God to bad public health.

1. Nuclear war

While only two nuclear weapons have been used in war so far – at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II – and nuclear stockpiles are down from their the peak they reached in the Cold War, it is a mistake to think that nuclear war is impossible. In fact, it might not be improbable.

The Cuban Missile crisis was very close to turning nuclear. If we assume one such event every 69 years and a one in three chance that it might go all the way to being nuclear war, the chance of such a catastrophe increases to about one in 200 per year.

Worse still, the Cuban Missile crisis was only the most well-known case. The history of Soviet-US nuclear deterrence is full of close calls and dangerous mistakes. The actual probability has changed depending on international tensions, but it seems implausible that the chances would be much lower than one in 1000 per year.

A full-scale nuclear war between major powers would kill hundreds of millions of people directly or through the near aftermath – an unimaginable disaster. But that is not enough to make it an existential risk.

Similarly the hazards of fallout are often exaggerated – potentially deadly locally, but globally a relatively limited problem. Cobalt bombs were proposed as a hypothetical doomsday weapon that would kill everybody with fallout, but are in practice hard and expensive to build. And they are physically just barely possible.

The real threat is nuclear winter – that is, soot lofted into the stratosphere causing a multi-year cooling and drying of the world. Modern climate simulations show that it could preclude agriculture across much of the world for years. If this scenario occurs billions would starve, leaving only scattered survivors that might be picked off by other threats such as disease. The main uncertainty is how the soot would behave: depending on the kind of soot the outcomes may be very different, and we currently have no good ways of estimating this.

2. Bioengineered pandemic

Natural pandemics have killed more people than wars. However, natural pandemics are unlikely to be existential threats: there are usually some people resistant to the pathogen, and the offspring of survivors would be more resistant. Evolution also does not favor parasites that wipe out their hosts, which is why syphilis went from a virulent killer to a chronic disease as it spread in Europe.

Unfortunately we can now make diseases nastier. One of the more famous examples is how the introduction of an extra gene in mousepox – the mouse version of smallpox – made it far more lethal and able to infect vaccinated individuals. Recent work on bird flu has demonstrated that the contagiousness of a disease can be deliberately boosted.

Right now the risk of somebody deliberately releasing something devastating is low. But as biotechnology gets better and cheaper, more groups will be able to make diseases worse.

Most work on bioweapons have been done by governments looking for something controllable, because wiping out humanity is not militarily useful. But there are always some people who might want to do things because they can. Others have higher purposes. For instance, the Aum Shinrikyo cult tried to hasten the apocalypse using bioweapons beside their more successful nerve gas attack. Some people think the Earth would be better off without humans, and so on.

The number of fatalities from bioweapon and epidemic outbreaks attacks looks like it has a power-law distribution – most attacks have few victims, but a few kill many. Given current numbers the risk of a global pandemic from bioterrorism seems very small. But this is just bioterrorism: governments have killed far more people than terrorists with bioweapons (up to 400,000 may have died from the WWII Japanese biowar program). And as technology gets more powerful in the future nastier pathogens become easier to design.

3. Superintelligence

Intelligence is very powerful. A tiny increment in problem-solving ability and group coordination is why we left the other apes in the dust. Now their continued existence depends on human decisions, not what they do. Being smart is a real advantage for people and organisations, so there is much effort in figuring out ways of improving our individual and collective intelligence: from cognition-enhancing drugs to artificial-intelligence software.

The problem is that intelligent entities are good at achieving their goals, but if the goals are badly set they can use their power to cleverly achieve disastrous ends. There is no reason to think that intelligence itself will make something behave nice and morally. In fact, it is possible to prove that certain types of superintelligent systems would not obey moral rules even if they were true.

Even more worrying is that in trying to explain things to an artificial intelligence we run into profound practical and philosophical problems. Human values are diffuse, complex things that we are not good at expressing, and even if we could do that we might not understand all the implications of what we wish for.

Software-based intelligence may very quickly go from below human to frighteningly powerful. The reason is that it may scale in different ways from biological intelligence: it can run faster on faster computers, parts can be distributed on more computers, different versions tested and updated on the fly, new algorithms incorporated that give a jump in performance.

It has been proposed that an “intelligence explosion” is possible when software becomes good enough at making better software. Should such a jump occur there would be a large difference in potential power between the smart system (or the people telling it what to do) and the rest of the world. This has clear potential for disaster if the goals are badly set.

The unusual thing about superintelligence is that we do not know if rapid and powerful intelligence explosions are possible: maybe our current civilisation as a whole is improving itself at the fastest possible rate. But there are good reasons to think that some technologies may speed things up far faster than current societies can handle. Similarly we do not have a good grip on just how dangerous different forms of superintelligence would be, or what mitigation strategies would actually work. It is very hard to reason about future technology we do not yet have, or intelligences greater than ourselves. Of the risks on this list, this is the one most likely to either be massive or just a mirage.

This is a surprisingly under-researched area. Even in the 50s and 60s when people were extremely confident that superintelligence could be achieved “within a generation”, they did not look much into safety issues. Maybe they did not take their predictions seriously, but more likely is that they just saw it as a remote future problem.

4. Nanotechnology

Nanotechnology is the control over matter with atomic or molecular precision. That is in itself not dangerous – instead, it would be very good news for most applications. The problem is that, like biotechnology, increasing power also increases the potential for abuses that are hard to defend against.

The big problem is not the infamous “grey goo” of self-replicating nanomachines eating everything. That would require clever design for this very purpose. It is tough to make a machine replicate: biology is much better at it, by default. Maybe some maniac would eventually succeed, but there are plenty of more low-hanging fruits on the destructive technology tree.

The most obvious risk is that atomically precise manufacturing looks ideal for rapid, cheap manufacturing of things like weapons. In a world where any government could “print” large amounts of autonomous or semi-autonomous weapons (including facilities to make even more) arms races could become very fast – and hence unstable, since doing a first strike before the enemy gets a too large advantage might be tempting.

Weapons can also be small, precision things: a “smart poison” that acts like a nerve gas but seeks out victims, or ubiquitous “gnatbot” surveillance systems for keeping populations obedient seems entirely possible. Also, there might be ways of getting nuclear proliferation and climate engineering into the hands of anybody who wants it.

We cannot judge the likelihood of existential risk from future nanotechnology, but it looks like it could be potentially disruptive just because it can give us whatever we wish for.

5. Unknown unknowns

The most unsettling possibility is that there is something out there that is very deadly, and we have no clue about it.

The silence in the sky might be evidence for this. Is the absence of aliens due to that life or intelligence is extremely rare, or that intelligent life tends to get wiped out? If there is a future Great Filter, it must have been noticed by other civilisations too, and even that didn’t help.

Whatever the threat is, it would have to be something that is nearly unavoidable even when you know it is there, no matter who and what you are. We do not know about any such threats (none of the others on this list work like this), but they might exist.

Note that just because something is unknown it doesn’t mean we cannot reason about it. In a remarkable paper Max Tegmark and Nick Bostrom show that a certain set of risks must be less than one chance in a billion per year, based on the relative age of Earth.

You might wonder why climate change or meteor impacts have been left off this list. Climate change, no matter how scary, is unlikely to make the entire planet uninhabitable (but it could compound other threats if our defences to it break down). Meteors could certainly wipe us out, but we would have to be very unlucky. The average mammalian species survives for about a million years. Hence, the background natural extinction rate is roughly one in a million per year. This is much lower than the nuclear-war risk, which after 70 years is still the biggest threat to our continued existence.

The availability heuristic makes us overestimate risks that are often in the media, and discount unprecedented risks. If we want to be around in a million years we need to correct that.

### 1AC — Nuclear War Advantage (Shorter)

#### Contention One: Nuclear War

#### First, China is hardening its position on Taiwan. This risks a major crisis.

White 15 — Hugh White, Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, former Intelligence Analyst with Australia’s Office of National Assessments and Senior Official with Australia’s Department of Defence, 2015 (“The harsh reality that Taiwan faces,” *The Straits Times*, April 15th, Available Online at http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/the-harsh-reality-that-taiwan-faces, Accessed 06-25-2016)

It is time to start worrying about Taiwan again.

In the past few years, it has slipped quietly into the background as tensions in the East China Sea and South China Sea have posed more urgent threats to regional peace and stability. But now old questions about Taiwan's longer-term future are re-emerging, and so are old fears that differences over Taiwan could rupture United States-China relations and drive Asia into a major crisis.

Taiwan's status has been a highly sensitive issue between Washington and Beijing ever since 1949, when defeated nationalists withdrew to the island as the communists swept to power in the mainland. The differences were papered over only when US-China relations were opened up after 1972. Taiwan was left in an awkward limbo, neither accepting Beijing's rule nor seeking recognition as an independent country.

Beijing has never wavered in its determination to bring Taiwan eventually under its rule, while America's Taiwan Relations Act enshrines its commitment to support Taiwan in resisting pressure from Beijing to reunify.

In the 1990s, after Taiwan became a vigorous democracy, presidents Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian started to push the boundaries of this status quo, seeking a more normal place for Taiwan in the international community. This infuriated Beijing and escalated tensions between China and America.

These tensions eased when, in 2003, then US President George W. Bush made it clear that the US would not support any Taiwanese push to change the status quo.

After President Ma Ying-jeou took office in 2008, he stepped back from his predecessors' challenge to the status quo, and instead sought to build relations with Beijing, especially by encouraging commercial ties, which have led to the two sides of the Taiwan Strait becoming deeply intertwined economically.

And China was happy to replace sticks with carrots in dealing with Taipei, apparently expecting that economic integration would eventually pave the way to political reunification, perhaps under the "one country, two systems" formula that Beijing applies to Hong Kong.

But that hope received a severe blow just a year ago, when Mr Ma's plans for closer economic links with the mainland sparked massive "Sunflower" demonstrations in Taipei by mainly young people who feared that economic entanglement would lead inexorably to precisely the political reunification that Beijing so clearly wants and expects. Then late last year, Mr Ma's policy of ever-closer economic relations suffered further repudiation by voters in a crucial round of municipal elections.

It is now widely expected that when Mr Ma's term as president ends next year, he will be replaced by a new leader who will be less accommodating to Beijing. While few expect that any future leader from either the Kuomintang or the Democratic Progressive Party will return to policies as provocative to China as those of Mr Lee or Mr Chen, the new leader will almost certainly be more assertive than Mr Ma has been.

That naturally alarms Beijing, and there is a risk that it will respond by taking a tougher line, looking for new ways to pressure Taipei into accepting the mainland's authority.

China's new leadership under President Xi Jinping seems increasingly impatient to resolve what it sees as the last vestige of China's centuries of humiliation and increasingly confident of its growing power to act with impunity. Already there are signs that its stance on Taiwan is hardening.

#### Second, political pressure in China will continue to grow — the CCP will be forced to act aggressively toward Taiwan.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

A common counterpoint to the argument above is that China-Taiwan relations have improved dramatically since 2008, so the probability of war is low.66 This, in turn, means the expected benefits offered by policies that would keep the United States out of a China-Taiwan conflict have decreased. Although this argument has merit, it is hard to be confident that cross-strait relations will remain good. Taiwan might again elect a more pro-independence government, or China might ramp up pressures for unification. Jia Qingguo, a professor at Peking University, recently wrote: “[P]olitical pressures on the Chinese government when it comes to Taiwan are tremendous and growing. In the past, the Chinese people knew that China was weak and could not stop the United States from selling weapons to Taiwan. Now, many believe that China should no longer tolerate such insulting behavior. Confronted with this mounting domestic pressure, the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] is finding it increasingly difficult to justify its weak responses.”67

#### Third, tensions are already rising because Taiwan’s new government refuses to accept the ‘92 consensus.

Reuters 16 — Reuters, 2016 (“China says has stopped communication mechanism with Taiwan,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 26th, Available Online at <http://www.smh.com.au/world/china-says-has-stopped-communication-mechanism-with-taiwan-20160626-gps230.html>, Accessed 06-29-2016)

The Chinese government said on Saturday it had stopped a communication mechanism with Taiwan because of the refusal of the self-ruled island's new government to recognise the "one China" principle, in the latest show of tension between the two.

China, which regards Taiwan as wayward province, is deeply suspicious of Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, who took office last month, as they suspect she will push for formal independence.

Tsai, who heads the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, says she wants to maintain the status quo with China and is committed to ensuring peace.

But China has insisted she recognise something called the "1992 consensus" reached between China's Communists and Taiwan's then-ruling Nationalists, under which both agreed there is only one China, with each having their own interpretation of what that means.

In a brief statement carried by the official Xinhua news agency, China's Taiwan Affairs Office said that since May 20, when Tsai took office, Taiwan has not affirmed this consensus.

"Because the Taiwan side has not acknowledged the 1992 consensus, this joint political basis for showing the one China principle, the cross Taiwan Strait contact and communication mechanism has already stopped," spokesman An Fengshan said.

#### Fourth, any crisis over Taiwan will escalate quickly — nuclear war is likely.

Littlefield and Lowther 15 — Alex Littlefield, Assistant Professor in the Department of International Trade at Feng Chia University (Taiwan), holds a Ph.D. in International Politics from National Chung Hsing University (Taiwan), and Adam Lowther, Research Professor at the Air Force Research Institute at Maxwell Air Force Base, Director of the School of Advanced Nuclear Deterrence Studies at the Air Force Global Strike Command, former Assistant Professor of Political Science at Arkansas Tech University and Columbus State University, holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Alabama, 2015 (“Taiwan and the Prospects for War Between China and America,” *The Diplomat*, August 11th, Available Online at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/taiwan-and-the-prospects-for-war-between-china-and-america/>, Accessed 06-25-2016)

Possible Scenario

While there are several scenarios where conflict between the United States and China is possible, some analysts believe that a conflict over Taiwan remains the most likely place where the PRC and the U.S. would come to blows. Beijing is aware that any coercive action on its part to force Taiwan to accept its political domination could incur the wrath of the United States. To prevent the U.S. from intervening in the region, China will certainly turn to its anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy, beginning with non-lethal means and non-lethal threats to discourage the American public from supporting the use of force in support of Taiwan.

If thwarted in its initial efforts to stop Chinese aggression against Taiwan, the United States may be tempted to resort to stronger measures and attack mainland China. A kinetic response to a cyber-attack, for example, although an option, would very likely lead to escalation on the part of the Chinese. Given the regime’s relative weakness and the probability that American attacks (cyber and conventional) on China will include strikes against PLA command and control (C2) nodes, which mingle conventional and nuclear C2, the Chinese may escalate to the use of a nuclear weapon (against a U.S. carrier in China’s self-declared waters for example) as a means of forcing de-escalation.

In the view of China, such a strike would not be a violation of its no-first-use policy because the strike would occur in sovereign Chinese waters, thus making the use of nuclear weapons a defensive act. Since Taiwan is a domestic matter, any U.S. intervention would be viewed as an act of aggression. This, in the minds of the Chinese, makes the United States an outside aggressor, not China.

It is also important to remember that nuclear weapons are an asymmetric response to American conventional superiority. Given that China is incapable of executing and sustaining a conventional military campaign against the continental United States, China would clearly have an asymmetry of interest and capability with the United States – far more is at stake for China than it is for the United States.

In essence, the only effective option in retaliation for a successful U.S. conventional campaign on Chinese soil is the nuclear one. Without making too crude a point, the nuclear option provides more bang for the buck, or yuan. Given that mutually assured destruction (MAD) is not part of China’s strategic thinking – in fact it is explicitly rejected – the PRC will see the situation very differently than the United States.

China likely has no desire to become a nuclear peer of the United States. It does not need to be in order to achieve its geopolitical objectives. However, China does have specific goals that are a part of its stated core security interests, including reunification with Taiwan. Reunification is necessary for China to reach its unstated goal of becoming a regional hegemon. As long as Taiwan maintains its de facto independence of China it acts as a literal and symbolic barrier to China’s power projection beyond the East China Sea. Without Taiwan, China cannot gain military hegemony in its own neighborhood.

China’s maritime land reclamation strategy for Southeast Asia pales in scope and significance with the historical and political value of Taiwan. With Taiwan returned to its rightful place, the relevance to China of the U.S. military presence in Japan and South Korea is greatly diminished. China’s relationship with the Philippines, which lies just to the south of Taiwan, would also change dramatically.

Although China criticizes the United States for playing the role of global hegemon, it is actively seeking to supplant the United States in Asia so that it can play a similar role in the region. While Beijing may take a longer view toward geopolitical issues than Washington does, Chinese political leaders must still be responsive to a domestic audience that demands ever higher levels of prosperity.

Central to China’s ability to guarantee that prosperity is the return of Taiwan, and control of the sea lines of commerce and communication upon which it relies. Unfortunately, too many Americans underestimate the importance of these core interests to China and the lengths to which China will ultimately go in order to guarantee them – even the use of nuclear weapons.

Should China succeed it pushing the United States back, the PRC can deal with regional territorial disputes bilaterally and without U.S. involvement. After all, Washington invariably takes the non-Chinese side.

China sees the U.S. as a direct competitor and obstacle to its geopolitical ambitions. As such it is preparing for the next step in a crisis that it will likely instigate, control, and conclude in the Taiwan Straits. China will likely use the election or statement of a pro-independence high-ranking official as the impetus for action. This is the same method it used when it fired missiles in the Straits in response to remarks by then-President Lee Teng-hui, ushering in the 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis. The U.S. brought an end to the mainland’s antics when the U.S.S Nimitz and six additional ships sailed into the Straits.

Despite the pro-China presidency of Ma Ying-jeou, China continues to expand its missile force targeting Taiwan and undertakes annual war games that simulate an attack on Taiwan.

China has not forgotten the humiliation it faced in 1996 and will be certain no U.S. carrier groups have access to the Strait during the next crisis. The Second Artillery Corps’ nuclear capabilities exist to help secure the results China seeks when the U.S. is caught off-guard, overwhelmed, and forced to either escalate a crisis or capitulate.

#### Fifth, any U.S. attempt to protect Taiwan will escalate to full-scale nuclear war.

White 15 — Hugh White, Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, former Intelligence Analyst with Australia’s Office of National Assessments and Senior Official with Australia’s Department of Defence, 2015 (“The harsh reality that Taiwan faces,” *The Straits Times*, April 15th, Available Online at http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/the-harsh-reality-that-taiwan-faces, Accessed 06-25-2016)

Even more worryingly, this reality does not yet seem to have sunk in in Washington, where leaders still talk boldly about their willingness to stand by Taiwan without seriously considering what that might mean in practice. Any US effort to support Taiwan militarily against China would be almost certain to escalate into a full-scale US-China war and quite possibly a nuclear exchange. That would be a disaster for everyone, including, of course, the people of Taiwan itself — far worse than reunification, in fact.

#### Sixth, tensions over Taiwan are the root cause of other regional tensions. A grand bargain would eliminate the most likely scenarios for major war.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“Time for a U.S.-China Grand Bargain,” Belfer Center Policy Brief, July, Available Online at <http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/files/glaser-us-china-jul15-final.pdf>, Accessed 06-24-2016, p. 2)

Reevaluating The U.S. Commitment To Taiwan

China’s rise poses difficult challenges for the United States. If military competition and political frictions continue to intensify, the United States could find itself engaged in a new cold war. China has long made clear that unification with Taiwan is a paramount political and security goal. The United States is currently committed to defending Taiwan if China launches an unprovoked attack. This commitment is a deep source of Chinese distrust of, and tension with, the United States. Consequently, the United States should consider ending this commitment. Doing so would have both benefits and costs.

Benefits. Eliminating the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would have three main benefits. First, it would reduce the probability of war between the United States and China over Taiwan. China’s improved military capabilities are reducing the United States’ ability to come to Taiwan’s aid in the event of a challenge from Beijing. These capabilities, combined with China’s expectation of growing regional influence, may lead China to decide to seek reunification with Taiwan through military means. Second, U.S. support for Taiwan may be the most important policy-driven source of China’s suspicions about U.S. motives and intentions in East Asia. Consequently, ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan has the potential to dramatically improve U.S.-China relations. Third, terminating this commitment could also greatly moderate the intensifying military competition between the United States and China. Much of China’s military modernization, including its growing capability to control the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the South China and East China Seas, is dedicated to defending Taiwan. The United States has devised a concept, widely known as AirSea Battle, to counter China’s increasing capabilities and maintain dominance of these SLOCs. Ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would eliminate the scenario most likely to draw the United States into a large war with China, thus reducing the importance that China places on controlling these SLOCs and helping to significantly moderate U.S.-China competition.

#### Finally, U.S.-China war immediately kills millions — and the fallout would destroy the planet.

Wittner 11 — Lawrence S. Wittner, Emeritus Professor of History at the State University of New York at Albany, holds a Ph.D. in History from Columbia University, 2011 (“Is a Nuclear War with China Possible?,” *Huntington News*, November 28th, Available Online at http://www.huntingtonnews.net/14446, Accessed 02-07-2013)

While nuclear weapons exist, there remains a danger that they will be used. After all, for centuries national conflicts have led to wars, with nations employing their deadliest weapons. The current deterioration of U.S. relations with China might end up providing us with yet another example of this phenomenon.

The gathering tension between the United States and China is clear enough. Disturbed by China’s growing economic and military strength, the U.S. government recently challenged China’s claims in the South China Sea, increased the U.S. military presence in Australia, and deepened U.S. military ties with other nations in the Pacific region. According to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the United States was “asserting our own position as a Pacific power.”

But need this lead to nuclear war?

Not necessarily. And yet, there are signs that it could. After all, both the United States and China possess large numbers of nuclear weapons. The U.S. government threatened to attack China with nuclear weapons during the Korean War and, later, during the conflict over the future of China’s offshore islands, Quemoy and Matsu. In the midst of the latter confrontation, President Dwight Eisenhower declared publicly, and chillingly, that U.S. nuclear weapons would “be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.”

Of course, China didn’t have nuclear weapons then. Now that it does, perhaps the behavior of national leaders will be more temperate. But the loose nuclear threats of U.S. and Soviet government officials during the Cold War, when both nations had vast nuclear arsenals, should convince us that, even as the military ante is raised, nuclear saber-rattling persists.

Some pundits argue that nuclear weapons prevent wars between nuclear-armed nations; and, admittedly, there haven’t been very many—at least not yet. But the Kargil War of 1999, between nuclear-armed India and nuclear-armed Pakistan, should convince us that such wars can occur. Indeed, in that case, the conflict almost slipped into a nuclear war. Pakistan’s foreign secretary threatened that, if the war escalated, his country felt free to use “any weapon” in its arsenal. During the conflict, Pakistan did move nuclear weapons toward its border, while India, it is claimed, readied its own nuclear missiles for an attack on Pakistan.

At the least, though, don’t nuclear weapons deter a nuclear attack? Do they? Obviously, NATO leaders didn’t feel deterred, for, throughout the Cold War, NATO’s strategy was to respond to a Soviet conventional military attack on Western Europe by launching a Western nuclear attack on the nuclear-armed Soviet Union. Furthermore, if U.S. government officials really believed that nuclear deterrence worked, they would not have resorted to championing “Star Wars” and its modern variant, national missile defense. Why are these vastly expensive—and probably unworkable—military defense systems needed if other nuclear powers are deterred from attacking by U.S. nuclear might?

Of course, the bottom line for those Americans convinced that nuclear weapons safeguard them from a Chinese nuclear attack might be that the U.S. nuclear arsenal is far greater than its Chinese counterpart. Today, it is estimated that the U.S. government possesses over five thousand nuclear warheads, while the Chinese government has a total inventory of roughly three hundred. Moreover, only about forty of these Chinese nuclear weapons can reach the United States. Surely the United States would “win” any nuclear war with China.

But what would that “victory” entail? A nuclear attack by China would immediately slaughter at least 10 million Americans in a great storm of blast and fire, while leaving many more dying horribly of sickness and radiation poisoning. The Chinese death toll in a nuclear war would be far higher. Both nations would be reduced to smoldering, radioactive wastelands. Also, radioactive debris sent aloft by the nuclear explosions would blot out the sun and bring on a “nuclear winter” around the globe—destroying agriculture, creating worldwide famine, and generating chaos and destruction.

Moreover, in another decade the extent of this catastrophe would be far worse. The Chinese government is currently expanding its nuclear arsenal, and by the year 2020 it is expected to more than double its number of nuclear weapons that can hit the United States. The U.S. government, in turn, has plans to spend hundreds of billions of dollars “modernizing” its nuclear weapons and nuclear production facilities over the next decade.

To avert the enormous disaster of a U.S.-China nuclear war, there are two obvious actions that can be taken. The first is to get rid of nuclear weapons, as the nuclear powers have agreed to do but thus far have resisted doing. The second, conducted while the nuclear disarmament process is occurring, is to improve U.S.-China relations. If the American and Chinese people are interested in ensuring their survival and that of the world, they should be working to encourage these policies.

### 1AC — U.S.-China Relations Advantage

#### Contention Two: U.S.-China Relations

#### First, U.S.-China relations have reached a dangerous tipping point — overcoming mutual hostility is vital.

Lampton 15 — David M. Lampton, Chairman of the Board of The Asia Foundation, Hyman Professor and Director of SAIS-China and China Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, Member and former President of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations Executive Committee, Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, was named the most influential China watcher by the Institute of International Relations at the China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing in 2015, holds a Ph.D. from Stanford University, 2015 (“China and the United States: A Conversation with David M. Lampton,” The Asia Foundation, July 29th, Available Online at <http://asiafoundation.org/2015/07/29/china-and-the-united-states-a-conversation-with-david-m-lampton/>, Accessed 06-29-2016)

*You have publicly warned that the U.S.-China relationship is at a critical “tipping point.” From your perspective as a longtime China watcher, what do you think about the future trajectory of bilateral relations?*

I said we were approaching a tipping point. I didn’t say we had gone off the cliff. I don’t know if we’re five feet, five yards, or five miles from that point, but we’re a lot closer to it than I’d like to be.

For the 40-plus years since Nixon went to China, and certainly since Deng Xiaoping came back to power in 1977, most Americans have seen China as going in the “right direction” in terms of foreign and domestic policy – with ups and downs, to be sure. 1989 raised questions. But Deng Xiaoping and George H. W. Bush got ties modestly back on track. China was opening up, investing in the world. Most Americans saw China as moving in the right direction. Conversely, most Chinese saw the U.S. as basically moving in the right direction in terms of policy towards China.

Somewhere around 2008 to 2010, each side began to wonder about the direction of the other. With the rise of South China Sea problems, Diaoyu, and anti-Japanese demonstrations, many Americans weren’t so sure China was going in the right direction, particularly during the global financial crisis. Americans were worried about their economic future. China had a very big trade surplus. It seemed that China was successful but at the same time was going the wrong way in terms of foreign and domestic policy. I think most Americans are approaching the point where they believe it’s going the wrong way for us. The election coming up is going to give voice to that.

In China, one of the first questions they ask is, “Why is the U.S. trying to keep China down or contain China?” One of the major things pushing this is: when you have positive expectations for the future, you then have positive policies and you subordinate frictions, because the long term is going to be better. But if you think the future is going to be worse, you fall into a threatening posture; you’re not willing to overlook current frictions. Mentally, where the two peoples currently are is not a healthy place.

We’re moving from a relationship that was trying to find partnership to one now of deterrence. And threats are a key part of that. China has one aircraft carrier, is building another one for sure, and maybe a third one. China is putting military capability on some of these island reclamation projects in the South China Sea. China’s recent military White Paper said the PRC was going to build a more seaworthy, power-projection navy. And the U.S., with the Pivot announcement in 2011, rotating troops – small forces – through Australia, and tightening up our alliance structure with Japan, all that creates anxiety in Beijing. Now we’ve got joint exercises with Australia, Japan, and the Philippines. These are worrisome developments for China. So what you see is that we’re each reacting to the other. The relationship is becoming fundamentally more competitive. My feeling about this tipping point is that psychologically, both our people are going in the wrong direction. And the underlying security relationship is deteriorating. My remarks on the tipping point weren’t so much to criticize one party or the other, but were more of a call to say, “Let’s address the real problem.”

#### Second, the plan is *the only way* to reverse this trend — resolving Taiwan overcomes every other impediment to strong relations.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

More important, however, is that focusing on the quality of current cross-strait relations overlooks two other less direct, but potentially more significant, benefits of U.S. accommodation on Taiwan. First, U.S. support for Taiwan is one of the most important, possibly the most important, policy-driven sources of China's suspicions about U.S. motives and intentions. Although the United States does not take a position on what the final outcome of the Taiwan issue should be, China considers U.S. support of Taiwan a key source of “strategic distrust.” A recent study by two leading authorities on U.S.-China relations concludes that Beijing views U.S. arms sales to Taiwan “as confirming American arrogance and determination to interfere in China's domestic affairs and to prevent peaceful unification from occurring, thereby harming a clearly-articulated Chinese core interest.” In a similar vein, their report argues that “continuing to provide Taiwan with advanced weapons … is viewed as pernicious in Chinese eyes and has added to suspicion that Washington will disregard Chinese interests and sentiments as long as China's power position is secondary to America's.”68 Nathan and Scobell conclude that “most Chinese see strategic motives at the root of American behavior. They believe that keeping the Taiwan problem going helps the U.S. tie China down.”69 Similarly, a prominent Chinese analyst argues: “The position the U.S. takes on the Taiwan issue determines the essence of American strategy toward China, and thus determines the quality and status of U.S.-China relations.”70 Xu Hui, a professor at China's National Defense University, holds that “U.S. policies toward Taiwan have been and are the fundamental cause of some anti-American sentiment among the Chinese public. … I assure you that a posture change of the U.S. policy on Taiwan will remove the major obstacle for our military-to-military relations and also strengthen Sino-American cooperation by winning the hearts and minds of 1.3 billion Chinese people.”71 In short, ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan has the potential to dramatically improve U.S.-China relations, which in turn could increase the possibility of cooperation on other issues and reduce the probability of competition and conflict.

#### Third, crossing the tipping point increases the risk of war and undermines cooperation. Relations *aren’t* resilient without the plan.

Lampton 15 — David M. Lampton, Chairman of the Board of The Asia Foundation, Hyman Professor and Director of SAIS-China and China Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, Member and former President of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations Executive Committee, Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, was named the most influential China watcher by the Institute of International Relations at the China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing in 2015, holds a Ph.D. from Stanford University, 2015 (“A Tipping Point in U.S.-China Relations is Upon Us,” *U.S.-China Perception Monitor*, May 11th, Available Online at  [http://www.uscnpm.org/blog/2015/05/11/a-tipping-point-in-u-s-china-relations-is-upon-us-part-i/](http://asiafoundation.org/2015/07/29/china-and-the-united-states-a-conversation-with-david-m-lampton/), Accessed 06-29-2016)

For eight U.S. and five Chinese administrations, Washington and Beijing maintained remarkable policy continuity—broadly speaking, constructive engagement. This continuity has persisted despite periodic instabilities, problems, and crises. Some of these developments required time, flexibility, and wisdom to heal. They sometimes left scar tissue. But, none of these challenges ever destroyed overall assessments in both our nations that we each had fundamental, shared interests requiring cooperation and that the costs of conflict outweighed possible gains.

Assessments of relative power in both countries for much of the last four decades created few incentives in either society to rethink fundamental policy. Chinese seemingly were resigned to “live with the hegemon,” as one respected Chinese professor put it, and Americans were secure in their dominance and preoccupied with conflicts elsewhere. After the 9/11 attacks on America, China was seen as non-threatening, indeed willing to use some of its resources in the “War on Terror.” In a reflective moment after the 9/11 attacks, then Ambassador to China Sandy Randt delivered a speech to Johns Hopkins–SAIS in which he said, “We have seen the enemy, and it is not China.”

In the economic realm, expectations for growth in each society created common interests that subordinated many underlying frictions, whether economic or human rights. The positive balance between hope and fear tipped behavior toward restraint and patience. Things unfortunately have changed dramatically since about 2010. The tipping point is near. Our respective fears are nearer to outweighing our hopes than at any time since normalization.

We are witnessing the erosion of some critical underlying supports for predominantly positive U.S.-China ties. Though the foundation has not crumbled, today important components of the American policy elite increasingly are coming to see China as a threat to American “primacy.” In China, increasing fractions of the elite and public see America as an impediment to China’s achieving its rightful international role and not helpful to maintaining domestic stability.

Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd put it well, characterizing the narrative of an unidentified Chinese Communist Party document [perhaps the new National Security Blue Book], and analogous American thinking, in the following terms: “In Beijing’s eyes the U.S. is deeply opposed to China’s rise … American strategy toward China, it said, had five objectives: to isolate the country, contain it, diminish it, divide it, and sabotage its political leadership.” The American narrative, as Rudd described it, is hardly more positive about Beijing: “Beijing’s long-term policy is aimed at pushing the U.S. out of Asia altogether and establishing a Chinese sphere of influence spanning the region.”[1]

Since about 2008, there has been a sequence of regional and global developments and incidents that have provided fertile soil in which these negative narratives have grown in each of our societies. Among them are: the 2008 financial crisis, incidents in Hong Kong, developments in the south and east China seas, U.S. inability to quickly exit Middle Eastern and Central Asian quagmires, and the confusion in America and elsewhere about where China is headed internally and in terms of its foreign policy. Current Chinese debate over western (universal) values, subversion, and “black hands” unsettles most outside observers, not least Americans.

What is happening? If developments continue along the current trajectory, both countries will have progressively less security, at higher cost; the probabilities of intentional, accidental, or catalytic violent confrontations will increase; the world will enjoy less cooperation on transnational issues requiring joint Sino-American efforts; and, economic welfare in both societies will be diminished. What can be done?

Fundamentally, America has to rethink its objective of primacy and China must recalibrate its own sense of strength and what that entitles it to. Americans must find ways to accommodate China’s rightful desire for greater voice in international affairs and institutions such as the IMF, and China should improve relations with its neighbors—reassure them. The words “accommodation” or “compromise” in either China or the United States should not be dirty words. Both nations must be more realistic about their own power, what constitutes power, and how it can be exercised in a world in which a central reality is interdependence. Sino-American interdependence needs to be systematically reinforced, and joint security and economic institutions must be created. Balance and stability in Asia should be our objective, not the primacy of either side.

#### Finally, U.S.-China cooperation is crucial to address all global challenges.

Cohen et al. 9 — William S. Cohen, Chairman and CEO of The Cohen Group—a strategic business consulting firm, served as Secretary of Defense from 1997 until 2001, served in the U.S. Senate from 1979 to 1997 and in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1975 to 1979, et al., 2009 (“Smart Power in U.S.-China Relations,” *Smart Power in U.S.-China Relations: A Report of the CSIS Commission on China*, March, Available Online at http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090304\_mcgiffert\_uschinasmartpower\_web.pdf, Accessed 08-13-2012, p. 1)

The evolution of Sino-U.S. relations over the next months, years, and decades has the potential to have a greater impact on global security and prosperity than any other bilateral or multilateral arrangement. In this sense, many analysts consider the U.S.-China diplomatic relationship to be the most influential in the world. Without question, strong and stable U.S. alliances provide the foundation for the protection and promotion of U.S. and global interests. Yet within that broad framework, the trajectory of U.S.-China relations will determine the success, or failure, of efforts to address the toughest global challenges: global financial stability, energy security and climate change, nonproliferation, and terrorism, among other pressing issues. Shepherding that trajectory in the most constructive direction possible must therefore be a priority for Washington and Beijing. Virtually no major global challenge can be met without U.S.-China cooperation.

### 1AC — Solvency

#### Contention ( ): Solvency

#### First, the plan removes the biggest potential flashpoint for U.S.-Sino nuclear conflict. This creates sustainable peace and strong U.S.-Sino relations — containment strategies are counterproductive.

Glaser 11 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2011 (“Will China's Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism,” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 90, Number 2, March/April, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Lexis-Nexis)

Accommodation On Taiwan?

The prospects for avoiding intense military competition and war may be good, but growth in China's power may nevertheless require some changes in U.S. foreign policy that Washington will find disagreeable -- particularly regarding Taiwan. Although it lost control of Taiwan during the Chinese Civil War more than six decades ago, China still considers Taiwan to be part of its homeland, and unification remains a key political goal for Beijing. China has made clear that it will use force if Taiwan declares independence, and much of China's conventional military buildup has been dedicated to increasing its ability to coerce Taiwan and reducing the United States' ability to intervene. Because China places such high value on Taiwan and because the United States and China — whatever they might formally agree to — have such different attitudes regarding the legitimacy of the status quo, the issue poses special dangers and challenges for the U.S.-Chinese relationship, placing it in a different category than Japan or South Korea.

A crisis over Taiwan could fairly easily escalate to nuclear war, because each step along the way might well seem rational to the actors involved. Current U.S. policy is designed to reduce the probability that Taiwan will declare independence and to make clear that the United States will not come to Taiwan's aid if it does. Nevertheless, the United States would find itself under pressure to protect Taiwan against any sort of attack, no matter how it originated. Given the different interests and perceptions of the various parties and the limited control Washington has over Taipei's behavior, a crisis could unfold in which the United States found itself following events rather than leading them.

Such dangers have been around for decades, but ongoing improvements in China's military capabilities may make Beijing more willing to escalate a Taiwan crisis. In addition to its improved conventional capabilities, China is modernizing its nuclear forces to increase their ability to survive and retaliate following a large-scale U.S. attack. Standard deterrence theory holds that Washington's current ability to destroy most or all of China's nuclear force enhances its bargaining position. China's nuclear modernization might remove that check on Chinese action, leading Beijing to behave more boldly in future crises than it has in past ones. A U.S. attempt to preserve its ability to defend Taiwan, meanwhile, could fuel a conventional and nuclear arms race. Enhancements to U.S. offensive targeting capabilities and strategic ballistic missile defenses might be interpreted by China as a signal of malign U.S. motives, leading to further Chinese military efforts and a general poisoning of U.S.-Chinese relations.

Given such risks, the United States should consider backing away from its commitment to Taiwan. This would remove the most obvious and contentious flash point between the United States and China and smooth the way for better relations between them in the decades to come. Critics of such a move argue that it would result in not only direct costs for the United States and Taiwan but indirect costs as well: Beijing would not be satisfied by such appeasement; instead, it would find its appetite whetted and make even greater demands afterward — spurred by Washington's lost credibility as a defender of its allies. The critics are wrong, however, because territorial concessions are not always bound to fail. Not all adversaries are Hitler, and when they are not, accommodation can be an effective policy tool. When an adversary has limited territorial goals, granting them can lead not to further demands but rather to satisfaction with the new status quo and a reduction of tension.

#### Second, a *quid-pro-quo* grand bargain is key — it maintains U.S. resolve.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

Insisting on Chinese concessions would also demonstrate U.S. resolve to protect American interests. By making its willingness to end its commitment to Taiwan contingent on Chinese concessions, the United States would make clear that it is willing to run the risk of protecting Taiwan and its allies' interests in the South China and East China Seas, if China were uncompromising. Once again, the key issue from the U.S. perspective comes back to information—if China is more likely to have unlimited aims, then the risks of U.S. accommodation are larger and the United States should therefore be less willing to adopt this strategy. As argued above, China's refusal to accept a grand bargain, especially one that is so clearly weighted toward its interests (unless China is determined to push the United States out of Northeast Asia), would indicate more ambitious Chinese aims. Thus, compared to unilateral concessions, insisting on a package deal that included Chinese concessions would demonstrate a higher level of U.S. resolve. In addition, resolution of the maritime disputes would directly increase U.S. security by eliminating disputes that, via alliance commitments, could draw the United States into dangerous crises with China.

## Case Backlines

### They Say: “China Says No”

#### China’s leaders will say “*Yes*” — it’s a good deal and it’s good politics.

Glaser 16 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2016 (“Grand Bargain or Bad Idea? U.S. Relations with China and Taiwan,” *International Security*, Volume 40, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

The probability that China would accept the grand bargain might be low, but neither the history that Kim reviews nor current Chinese thinking make this a certainty. As I [End Page 188] note in my article, there are reasons for doubting that China would make the required concessions: China’s positions on its long-standing disputes in the South China and East China Seas appear to have hardened over the past decade. Meanwhile, Chinese nationalism continues to grow, and President Xi Jinping appears committed to increasing China’s global prestige, which could rule out geopolitical compromises.

Nevertheless, the grand bargain would provide China with a major achievement at arguably little cost. Current Chinese nationalist claims have blown the importance of the maritime and sovereignty disputes in the South China and East China Seas far out of proportion to their material value. If China’s leaders decide to prioritize other goals, they might be able to deflate these nationalist claims, bringing them back in line with their actual value and selling this new interpretation domestically. At the same time, Chinese leaders should see that the grand bargain would provide large benefits to China, including elimination of the United States as a barrier to bringing Taiwan under its full sovereign control and, closely related, a large reduction in the security threat posed by the United States. The grand bargain, therefore, could be appealing to a Chinese leadership that faces daunting domestic challenges and intensifying regional opposition to its assertive policies and growing military might. Thus, while the probability of China accepting the grand bargain may be low, one should not entirely discount the possibility.

### They Say: “China Won’t Risk War Over Taiwan”

#### Recent positive trends haven’t resolved the fundamental issue — Taiwan conflict remains likely.

Kastner 16 — Scott L. Kastner, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland-College Park, Author of *Political Conflict and Economic Interdependence across the Taiwan Strait and Beyond* and Co-Editor of *Globalization and Security Relations across the Taiwan Strait: In the Shadow of China*, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California-San Diego, 2015/2016 (“Is the Taiwan Strait Still a Flash Point? Rethinking the Prospects for Armed Conflict between China and Taiwan,” *International Security*, Volume 40, Number 3, Winter, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

Conclusion

Broadly speaking, this analysis of recent trends in cross-strait relations offers some reason for optimism. To be clear, the relationship between China and Taiwan remains on a fundamental level untransformed, and it continues to be defined by a sovereignty dispute that is unlikely to be resolved in the foreseeable future. Against this backdrop, future cross-strait relations will almost certainly be characterized by periodic tensions, particularly after the DPP returns to power in Taiwan. Key trends in the relationship, however—including a shifting balance of military power, deepening economic integration and cooperation, and changing views in Taiwan on identity and sovereignty issues—combine to make less likely the cross-strait conflict scenarios that most worried analysts in the past.

That the relationship has become more stable does not mean, however, that military conflict in the Taiwan Strait has become unthinkable. The shifting balance of military power has the potential to create renewed instability if it begins to dominate other, more stabilizing, trends such as deepening cross-strait economic integration. As Chinese military capabilities continue to improve, future PRC leaders may become less willing to continue to accept the status quo in cross-strait relations. Analysts should not assume, however, that future Taiwanese leaders will readily accommodate new power realities. To the contrary, a number of factors—relating to both Taiwan’s domestic politics and structural commitment problems—will make it difficult for Taiwan to yield significant ground on sovereignty issues in the years ahead. A shifting balance of power, then, has the potential to give rise to renewed instability in the Taiwan Strait if it dominates other trends.

#### China will *never* give up unification with Taiwan — nationalism and public pressure.

Mearsheimer 14 — John J. Mearsheimer, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Program on International Security Policy at the University of Chicago, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Cornell University, 2014 (“Say Goodbye to Taiwan,” *The National Interest*, March/April, Available Online at <http://nationalinterest.org/article/say-goodbye-taiwan-9931?page=show>, Accessed 06-28-2016)

The nationalism story is straightforward and uncontroversial. China is deeply committed to making Taiwan part of China. For China’s elites, as well as its public, Taiwan can never become a sovereign state. It is sacred territory that has been part of China since ancient times, but was taken away by the hated Japanese in 1895—when China was weak and vulnerable. It must once again become an integral part of China. As Hu Jintao said in 2007 at the Seventeenth Party Congress: “The two sides of the Straits are bound to be reunified in the course of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”

The unification of China and Taiwan is one of the core elements of Chinese national identity. There is simply no compromising on this issue. Indeed, the legitimacy of the Chinese regime is bound up with making sure Taiwan does not become a sovereign state and that it eventually becomes an integral part of China.

Chinese leaders insist that Taiwan must be brought back into the fold sooner rather than later and that hopefully it can be done peacefully. At the same time, they have made it clear that force is an option if they have no other recourse.

#### Failure to resolve the sovereignty issue makes Taiwan a constant conflict threat.

Kastner 16 — Scott L. Kastner, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland-College Park, Author of *Political Conflict and Economic Interdependence across the Taiwan Strait and Beyond* and Co-Editor of *Globalization and Security Relations across the Taiwan Strait: In the Shadow of China*, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California-San Diego, 2015/2016 (“Is the Taiwan Strait Still a Flash Point? Rethinking the Prospects for Armed Conflict between China and Taiwan,” *International Security*, Volume 40, Number 3, Winter, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

The relationship across the Taiwan Strait has stabilized greatly in recent years, but it remains untransformed on a more fundamental level. The underlying issue in dispute, Taiwan’s sovereign status, remains unresolved. China’s military modernization—and the resulting shift in the cross-strait balance of power—have the potential to introduce dangerous new dynamics that could give rise to future conflict. Instability, though, is not inevitable. This article has provided a number of reasons to be optimistic about the future of cross-strait relations. Still, Officials in Washington, Beijing, and Taipei should not be lulled by the recent détente; long-term stability will require continued careful management of the Taiwan issue in all three capitals. [End Page 92]

#### Tensions will inevitably rise.

Kazianis 15 — Harry J. Kazianis, Editor of *RealClearDefense*—a member of the RealClearPolitics family of websites, Senior Fellow for Defense Policy at the Center for the National Interest, Senior Fellow at the China Policy Institute, former Executive Editor of *The National Interest* and former Editor of *The Diplomat*, holds an ALM in International Relations from Harvard University, 2015 (“5 Ways the U.S. and China Could Stumble Into War,” *The National Interest*, February 15th, Available Online at <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/5-ways-the-us-china-could-stumble-war-12250?page=show>, Accessed 06-28-2016)

5. Finally...Don’t Forget Taiwan

While tensions between the PRC and the ROC have certainly dropped considerably since the election of President Ma in 2008, there is no guarantee that Beijing may begin to exert pressure seeking the return of its so-called “renegade province.” In fact, Chinese president Xi Jinping alluded to such a possibility, stating, “the issue of political disagreements that exist between the two sides must reach a final resolution, step by step, and these issues cannot be passed on from generation to generation.”

So how does Taiwan play into the possibility of a U.S.-China war? Simple. As a recent report from the always-smart D.C.-based Center for Strategic and Budgetary Analysis (CSBA) explains, the dynamics of PRC-ROC tensions have not changed:

Despite atmospheric improvements in cross-strait ties...the fundamental nature of the dispute has not changed. Beijing still refuses to renounce the use of force as a means of reunification, and China’s steady, methodical build up of missile and air assets aimed at Taiwan serves as a constant and sobering reminder...At the same time, a series of polls indicate that a vast majority of the Taiwanese population continues to reject unification. While both sides’ official positions remain unaltered, the cross-strait military balance has moved decisively in China’s favor....Two decades of annual double-digit growth in Chinese military expenditures have resulted in Beijing acquiring a wide margin of conventional superiority over Taiwan, leading to growing concerns that it may no longer be able to withstand a large-scale PRC assault against its territory and raising the specter of a forcible annexation before U.S. forces could intervene.

There is also the very real possibility that a change of leadership in Taiwan, especially if a candidate from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) were to win the 2016 election, could ratchet up tensions—especially if they were to cool efforts to further tie Taiwan to the Chinese mainland. One could easily see Beijing begin to raise the stakes with Taipei—pushing for the resolution of what it has stated many times as one of its most important “core interests.” Clearly, Washington would be concerned over such a trend that could quickly create a crisis in U.S.-Chinese relations. If China were to forcibly attempt to reunite with Taiwan using kinetic force or an outright invasion, it seems some form of a U.S.-China conflict would be all but guaranteed.

### They Say: “No Nuclear Escalation”

#### Prefer our evidence — neg authors underestimate the risk.

Littlefield and Lowther 15 — Alex Littlefield, Assistant Professor in the Department of International Trade at Feng Chia University (Taiwan), holds a Ph.D. in International Politics from National Chung Hsing University (Taiwan), and Adam Lowther, Research Professor at the Air Force Research Institute at Maxwell Air Force Base, Director of the School of Advanced Nuclear Deterrence Studies at the Air Force Global Strike Command, former Assistant Professor of Political Science at Arkansas Tech University and Columbus State University, holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Alabama, 2015 (“Taiwan and the Prospects for War Between China and America,” *The Diplomat*, August 11th, Available Online at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/taiwan-and-the-prospects-for-war-between-china-and-america/>, Accessed 06-25-2016)

While the scenario described is certainly not inevitable, the fact tha[t] many American readers will see it as implausible if not impossible is an example of the mirror-imaging that often occurs when attempting to understand an adversary. China is not the United States nor do Chinese leaders think like their counterparts in the United States. Unless we give serious thought to possible scenarios where nuclear conflict could occur, the United States may be unprepared for a situation that escalates beyond its ability to prevent a catastrophe.

#### China *won’t* back down — nuclear escalation is likely.

White 15 — Hugh White, Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, former Intelligence Analyst with Australia’s Office of National Assessments and Senior Official with Australia’s Department of Defence, 2015 (“Would America Risk a Nuclear War with China over Taiwan?,” *The National Interest*, May 5th, Available Online at http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/would-america-risk-nuclear-war-china-over-taiwan-12808?page=show, Accessed 06-28-2016)

China's economy is now so big and so central to global trade and capital flows that the consequences of any disruption would be just as serious for America as for China. Militarily, America can no longer expect a swift and certain victory in a war over Taiwan. China's anti-access/area-denial capabilities would preclude direct US intervention unless those capabilities had first been degraded by a sustained and wide-ranging strike campaign against Chinese bases and forces.

China would very likely respond to such a campaign with attacks on US and allied bases throughout Asia. The US has no evident means to cap the resulting escalation spiral, and no one could be sure it would stop below the nuclear threshold. The possibility of nuclear attacks on US cities would have to be considered.

These new realities of power mean that today a US-China conflict would impose equal risks and costs on both sides. And where costs and risks are equal, the advantage lies with those who have more at stake, and hence greater resolve. China's leaders today seem to think they hold this advantage, and they are probably right. It is therefore a big mistake to keep assuming, as many people seem to do, that China would be sure to back off before a crisis over Taiwan became a conflict.

US leaders must therefore ask what happens if Beijing does not back down as a crisis escalates. At what point would they back down instead? What would be the damage to US global leadership if Washington brought on a confrontation with China and then blinked first? What could happen if Washington didn't blink first? Is Taiwan's status quo worth a global economic collapse? It is worth a real risk of nuclear war with China?

#### U.S.-China conflict could go nuclear because of China’s fears of conventional counterforce.

Talmadge 16 — Caitlin Talmadge, Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Member of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at The George Washington University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016 (“Preventing Nuclear Escalation in U.S.–China Conflict,” Policy Brief — U.S.-China Nuclear Project, February, Available Online at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/china_policy_brief_talmadge_0.pdf>, Accessed 06-24-2016, p. 1)

Conventional Counterforce as a Pathway to Nuclear Escalation

Conventional war between the United States and China remains a low-probability event. But if such a war were to break out, the risk of nuclear escalation—that is, actual detonation of nuclear weapons— likely would be higher than many observers realize. Some aspects of a likely U.S. campaign in a conventional war against China could look to China like an attempt at conventional counterforce, pressuring China to escalate to nuclear use while it still could.

This escalation scenario is distinct from other possible pathways to nuclear use. For example, in the Cold War the classic scenario for escalation was pre-emption, the notion that one side might try to use its nuclear weapons to pre-emptively destroy the arsenal of the other. Other scenarios for nuclear escalation include mistaken launch based on faulty warning information, and unauthorized launch by a commander who is physically able to use nuclear weapons but does not have political permission to do so. In addition, some states develop doctrines that deliberately threaten to escalate to the first use of nuclear weapons in the event of rapid conventional losses.

Nuclear escalation in response to an opponent’s perceived attempt at conventional counterforce constitutes an alternative pathway to nuclear escalation. It can arise when one side’s conventional military campaign infringes or appears poised to infringe on the other side’s ability to use or control its nuclear arsenal. For example, conventional military attacks by one side against the other’s command and control networks, air defenses, early warning radars, submarines, and missile sites have the potential not only to degrade that side’s conventional capabilities but also its nuclear capabilities. After all, command and control networks for conventional forces may also be relevant to the control of nuclear weapons; air defense systems may protect both conventional and nuclear assets; early warning radars are relevant to both conventional and nuclear operations; attack submarines and ballistic missile submarines share shore-based infrastructure, with the former often protecting the latter; and the same sites can house both conventional and nuclear missiles (called co-location).

For all of these reasons, a state subject to attack on these targets may have a difficult time distinguishing whether the adversary is merely conducting a normal conventional campaign, or is seeking to neuter the state’s nuclear capabilities. If the state fears the latter, it may wish to escalate to nuclear use while it still has the ability to do so. Such fears also could lead the state to engage in behaviors that make other pathways to escalation more likely. For example, the state could opt for more decentralized control of nuclear weapons, which would reduce vulnerability to conventional counterforce but heighten the danger of unauthorized launch.

Ultimately, escalation depends on how a state perceives an aggressive conventional campaign against it. The state waging the campaign might use conventional force to target the opponent’s nuclear capabilities inadvertently, not realizing that the conventional campaign was starting to look to the opponent like counterforce. Or it might do so deliberately, actively embracing this risk as a way to increase pressure on the adversary. Either way, the target state’s fear of disarmament could lead that state to use nuclear weapons.

## Strategic Clarity CP Answers

### Permutations

#### Permute: do both — this avoids the Deterrence DA link because the addition of the counterplan to the grand bargain clarifies U.S. resolve.

#### Permute: plan plus *threat of counterplan* — as part of negotiations, inform China that the U.S. will enact the counterplan if the PRC doesn’t agree to the grand bargain. This increases U.S. leverage.

### Deterrence Fails

#### The U.S. can’t effectively defend Taiwan and China knows it — deterrence fails.

White 15 — Hugh White, Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, former Intelligence Analyst with Australia’s Office of National Assessments and Senior Official with Australia’s Department of Defence, 2015 (“The harsh reality that Taiwan faces,” *The Straits Times*, April 15th, Available Online at http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/the-harsh-reality-that-taiwan-faces, Accessed 06-25-2016)

But the stark reality is that these days, there is not much the US can realistically do to help Taipei stand up to serious pressure from Beijing.

Back in 1996 when they last went toe-to-toe over Taiwan, the US could simply send a couple of aircraft carriers into the area to force China to back off. Today the balance of power is vastly different: China can sink the carriers, and their economies are so intertwined that trade sanctions of the kind the US used against Russia recently are simply unthinkable.

This reality does not yet seem to have been understood in Taiwan. The overwhelming desire on the island is to preserve its democracy and avoid reunification by preserving the status quo. But it understands that China's patience is not inexhaustible — eventually China wants to get Taiwan back.

Taiwan also understands that it cannot stand up to the mainland by itself, but it hopes that by slowly expanding its international status and profile within the status quo — without seeking independence — it can build support among regional countries as well as from the US, which will help it resist Beijing's ambitions for eventual reunification.

Alas, this seems an illusion. There is a real danger that the Taiwanese overestimate the international support they can rely on if Beijing decides to get tough.

No one visiting Taipei can fail to be impressed by what the Taiwanese have achieved in recent decades, not just economically but also politically, socially and culturally. But the harsh reality is that no country is going to sacrifice its relations with China in order to help Taiwan preserve the status quo. China is simply too important economically, and too powerful militarily, for anyone to confront it on Taiwan's behalf, especially when everyone knows how determined China is to achieve reunification eventually.

#### China won’t take the threat of the counterplan seriously — they think the U.S. will eventually back down.

Mearsheimer 14 — John J. Mearsheimer, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Program on International Security Policy at the University of Chicago, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Cornell University, 2014 (“Say Goodbye to Taiwan,” *The National Interest*, March/April, Available Online at <http://nationalinterest.org/article/say-goodbye-taiwan-9931?page=show>, Accessed 06-28-2016)

While the United States has good reasons to want Taiwan as part of the balancing coalition it will build against China, there are also reasons to think this relationship is not sustainable over the long term. For starters, at some point in the next decade or so it will become impossible for the United States to help Taiwan defend itself against a Chinese attack. Remember that we are talking about a China with much more military capability than it has today.

In addition, geography works in China’s favor in a major way, simply because Taiwan is so close to the Chinese mainland and so far away from the United States. When it comes to a competition between China and the United States over projecting military power into Taiwan, China wins hands down. Furthermore, in a fight over Taiwan, American policy makers would surely be reluctant to launch major attacks against Chinese forces on the mainland, for fear they might precipitate nuclear escalation. This reticence would also work to China’s advantage.

### Resolving Taiwan Key

#### Only the plan addresses the fundamental issue that risks war and ruins relations.

Glaser 16 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2016 (“Grand Bargain or Bad Idea? U.S. Relations with China and Taiwan,” *International Security*, Volume 40, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

Kim and Easley prefer the United States’ current policy to a grand bargain. Both recommend some modifications designed to reassure and engage China, including joint participation in humanitarian missions, naval cooperation on counter-piracy operations, deepening of economic interdependence via the U.S.-China bilateral investment treaty, and support of initiatives that would increase China’s role in international organizations. As I argue in my article, there is much to like about the current U.S. policy toward China and East Asia more broadly. If the United States adheres to this policy, then many of these recommendations would be useful refinements.

Nevertheless, proponents of the United States’ current China policy tend to underestimate the risks inherent in the U.S. commitment to Taiwan, including its role in fueling military competition and supporting Chinese elites’ negative views of U.S. motives. Neither Kim nor Easley says much about these risks, and certain of their remarks suggest they are not small. Kim holds that China is “much more confidant and ambitious” than when President Nixon visited China in 1972 and that “Chinese leaders today believe that the United States is determined to contain and divide China internally.” Easley expresses similar concerns, stating that “[f]oreign policy ambition in Beijing has outgrown the 1950s and 1990s cross-strait crises; [that] Chinese internal debates tend to paint the United States as a global competitor,” and that China “is pursuing a Chinese-centered regional architecture.” Given these views of China, Kim’s and Easley’s recommendations, though useful, are likely inadequate to meet the challenges currently facing the United States. This does not mean that such a modified U.S. policy would necessarily be inferior to the grand bargain I have recommended, given that all options for dealing with China’s rise will involve costs or risks, or both. The advantage of my proposed grand bargain, however, is that it confronts the challenge posed by China’s rise head on. It offers a path for eliminating the most serious geopolitical disagreement between the United States and China and for moderating the concomitant political strains and military competition, while providing valuable information about the limited nature of China’s goals that, in turn, reduces the risks of accommodation. And, in combination with policies that reaffirm and deepen the commitment of the United States to its East Asian allies, it would enable the United States to protect its key interests in the region. Notwithstanding the points raised by Kim and Easely, the grand bargain remains the best bet available to the United States.

### Hardline Bad DA

#### The counterplan crushes U.S.-China relations and increases the risk of war over Taiwan.

Kastner 16 — Scott L. Kastner, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland-College Park, Author of *Political Conflict and Economic Interdependence across the Taiwan Strait and Beyond* and Co-Editor of *Globalization and Security Relations across the Taiwan Strait: In the Shadow of China*, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California-San Diego, 2015/2016 (“Is the Taiwan Strait Still a Flash Point? Rethinking the Prospects for Armed Conflict between China and Taiwan,” *International Security*, Volume 40, Number 3, Winter, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

For similar reasons, U.S. policymakers should be skeptical of calls to dramatically increase the U.S. commitment to Taiwan’s security or to more visibly incorporate Taiwan into rebalancing initiatives.104 Such moves would be viewed as inflammatory in Beijing and could generate renewed pessimism about long-term trends in the strait. Perhaps more fundamentally, a much stronger U.S. commitment to Taiwan would stoke increased tensions in the U.S.-China relationship. As alluded to earlier, a key component of China’s expected costs of a Taiwan Strait conflict—regardless of whether the United States intervened—is the damage such a conflict would likely inflict on the broader U.S.-China relationship. But if the U.S.-China relationship is in tatters to begin with, then Beijing has less to lose in a cross-strait war. In essence, policies that increase U.S. support for Taiwan at a cost of a much worse U.S.-China relationship risk being self-defeating, as the increased stability generated by slowing the cross-strait power shift is canceled out by decreasing expected costs of war for China.

### Delay DA

#### Every delay in reaching a grand bargain increases the risk of war.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

China May Not Rise

A third counterargument focuses on the possibility that China's economic growth may falter, preventing China from becoming a fully capable major power. Under these conditions, U.S. accommodation would be wasted, with the United States unnecessarily suffering the costs of the grand bargain.109 According to this argument, the United States should wait to learn more about China's economic trajectory.

As with many of the knotty issues raised by the strategy of accommodation, this argument involves weighing a number of uncertain outcomes. Waiting would not be without its own risks. Most directly, waiting not only delays the possibility of improving U.S. relations with China, but also reduces the probability of improving them in the future. The likely growing strains in the countries' relationship during the waiting period would reduce the probability of eventually reaching a grand bargain. Given the likelihood that China will meet its economic potential, albeit with stumbles along the way, negotiating a grand bargain now is less risky than waiting.

## Deterrence DA Answers

### They Say: “Plan Kills U.S. Alliances”

#### No Alliance DA — other policies solve and the plan will push allies toward *the U.S.*, not China.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“Time for a U.S.-China Grand Bargain,” Belfer Center Policy Brief, July, Available Online at <http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/files/glaser-us-china-jul15-final.pdf>, Accessed 06-24-2016, p. 3)

Reassuring U.S. Allies

Possibly the most frequently raised objection to the United States ending its commitment to Taiwan is that it would undermine the credibility of U.S. defense commitments to its East Asia allies. This concern is overstated. U.S. entry into a grand bargain with China would undoubtedly send political shockwaves throughout the Asia Pacific, but the United States could take a variety of actions to demonstrate the strength of its continuing commitments. For example, it could increase the capability of the forces it commits to the region and further deepen joint U.S.- Japan military planning and high-level discussions on the requirements for extended deterrence. In fact, the United States has already begun taking some of these measures.

U.S. alliances are likely to endure because its allies do not have options that are more appealing. Meanwhile, their need for security is likely to continue to grow as China rises. Any doubts about U.S. reliability are likely to convince them to work harder to strengthen their alliances with the United States, not to abandon it or to bandwagon with China.

#### No Japan DA — it’s a different and deeper alliance.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

A third potential security danger is that accommodation by the United States could undermine its allies' assessments of the credibility of the United States to come to their aid if attacked by China. More specifically, critics believe that ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan could lead the Japanese to doubt America's commitment to defend Japan, which would undermine the U.S.-Japan alliance and in turn reduce U.S. security. Tucker and Glaser argue, “A U.S. decision to abandon Taiwan—leading to unification of an unwilling Taiwan with China— would be particularly alarming to Japan. … If Japan begins to doubt U.S. reliability, that could deal a fatal blow to the U.S.-Japan alliance.”97

Although a decision by the United States to end its commitment to Taiwan would certainly send political shock waves across the region, these concerns are overstated. There are similarities between the U.S. commitments to Taiwan and Japan, but also clear differences. U.S. security interests in Japan are much greater; as a result, the alliance involves much stronger political commitments and the deep integration of U.S. and Japanese military capabilities. In addition, the United States has a clear rationale for ending its commitment to Taiwan that does not apply to Japan: the U.S. commitment to Taiwan strains the U.S.-China relationship and increases the probability of war in ways that the U.S. commitment to Japan does not. Japan should appreciate these differences and therefore recognize that the ending of the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would not indicate a coming diminution of the U.S. commitment to Japan. U.S. leaders could work to make sure that their Japanese counterparts fully appreciate these differences.

#### Their internal link is backward — Japan will react to the plan by tightening the Alliance.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

Finally, as China's power continues to grow, Japan's need for U.S. security guarantees will also grow. Doubts about U.S. reliability are therefore likely to convince Japan to work harder to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance, not to abandon it or to bandwagon with China.99

#### The plan results in other policies that *strengthen* the Japan alliance.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

In addition, the United States could take other actions that would starkly distinguish its policies toward Japan from its policies toward Taiwan, which should help to offset doubts that accommodation on Taiwan might create. Most obviously, the United States could increase the size and improve the quality of the forces it commits to Japan's protection. Other policies could include further deepening U.S.-Japan joint military planning and continuing high-level discussions of the requirements for extending deterrence to Japan. Growth in Chinese conventional and nuclear forces has increased the importance of these interactions; ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan would make them still more valuable.98

### They Say: “Plan Causes Chinese Expansionism”

#### The plan resolves every conflict that might prompt Chinese expansionism.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

Taiwan Is No Longer The Key Issue

A second counterargument is that Taiwan is no longer the key issue straining U.S.-China relations. Consequently, focusing on Taiwan is misguided. As discussed earlier, cross-strait relations have been improving for many years. At the same time, China's disputes with its neighbors in the South China and East China Seas have become more intense, and increasingly define day-to-day tensions in the region. Possibly most worrisome, Sino-Japanese relations have become increasingly strained in the past few years, taking the spotlight off Taiwan.

Two rejoinders help to put this counterargument into perspective. As I have already argued, the dangers generated by the U.S. commitment to Taiwan go well beyond the immediate possibility of the United States fighting China to protect Taiwan and, therefore, are not adequately captured by focusing solely on the cross-strait relationship. The U.S. commitment to Taiwan is among the key factors fueling Chinese doubts about U.S. motives in the region and Chinese worries about a war over Taiwan make control of the Northeast Asian SLOCs far more important. These worries contribute to military competition and strained political relations, thereby increasing the probability of conflict over the longer term. Second, a grand bargain would deal fully with this counterargument by requiring resolution of these other disputes.

#### The plan gives China a status quo it can live with — removing the motivation for expansionism.

Kastner 16 — Scott L. Kastner, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland-College Park, Author of *Political Conflict and Economic Interdependence across the Taiwan Strait and Beyond* and Co-Editor of *Globalization and Security Relations across the Taiwan Strait: In the Shadow of China*, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California-San Diego, 2015/2016 (“Is the Taiwan Strait Still a Flash Point? Rethinking the Prospects for Armed Conflict between China and Taiwan,” *International Security*, Volume 40, Number 3, Winter, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

The analysis presented in this article has significant implications for U.S. policy toward the Taiwan Strait. On the one hand, the potential dangers posed by a shifting cross-strait balance of power suggest that proposals calling for a reduced U.S. commitment to Taiwan’s security carry with them significant risks. For instance, a U.S. decision to terminate arms sales to the island would almost certainly exacerbate changes in the cross-strait balance of power. Such an effect could occur both directly, by undercutting Taiwan’s access to advanced [End Page 90] weaponry, and indirectly, by signaling a reduced U.S. interest in Taiwan’s security (and hence reduced willingness to intervene in the event of conflict in the Taiwan Strait). This is not to say that a concept such as Charles Glaser’s grand bargain, where the United States would end its commitment to Taiwan in exchange for the PRC peacefully settling other regional maritime disputes and accepting a U.S. role in the region,103 would necessarily contribute to instability in the Taiwan Strait. Rather, I have argued that the destabilizing effect of a shifting military balance is conditional on the evolution of other trends, particularly those that affect China’s expected costs of war and those that affect the degree to which Chinese policymakers are optimistic or pessimistic about where Taiwan is heading over the long term. Yet, because a reduced U.S. commitment to Taiwan would affect the cross-strait military balance, such a policy shift is risky and should occur only in the context of a broader understanding that significantly increases China’s stake in a stable status quo.

#### The “recognize the U.S.’s security role” QPQ gets China to commit to the new status quo.

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A second component of a grand bargain would be official Chinese acceptance of the United States' long-term security role in East Asia, including its alliances and forward-deployed forces. There have been periods when China viewed the U.S.-Japan alliance relatively favorable. For example, in 1980 China's leader, Hua Guofeng, stated: “We appreciate Japan's efforts to strengthen its alliance with the United States.”103 Since then a variety of factors, including the decline of Soviet power and the redefinition of the U.S.-Japan alliance starting in the mid-1990s have reduced, if not eliminated, China's positive assessment.104 In recent years, some Chinese elites have begun expressing harshly negative views. For example, in 2014 the deputy chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army described the U.S. alliance system as “an antiquated relic of the Cold War that should be replaced by an Asia-centric security architecture.”105 Although open to varying interpretations, President Xi Jinping's call for an Asian security order managed by Asian countries and his criticism of “alliances as unhelpful for the region's security” can be viewed as offering a vision of the future in which the United States no longer plays a security role in East Asia. Increasingly, there is support in China for the conclusion that “in Beijing's eyes, the U.S. led security architecture is outliving the usefulness it once provided by ensuring the regional stability necessary for China's development. Instead, China views the alliance system as increasingly incapable of providing lasting security and itself a potential source of threat.”106

Especially in light of Beijing's increasingly negative assessment, official recognition and acceptance of the United States' continuing alliance commitments would be a valuable signal (not cheap talk). It would indicate the dominance of certain domestic forces over others and the Chinese leadership's willingness to accept domestic political costs to advance China's foreign policy. Such action would not guarantee stability in China's policy, but it would provide greater confidence that China was willing to accept a revised geopolitical status quo. Maybe more important, if China were unwilling (or unable) to provide this official acceptance, the United States would have to be more worried that China's leaders believe that its role in East Asia requires pushing the United States out of the region.

### They Say: “Plan Causes Global Arms Races”

#### The plan eliminates the flashpoints that spur arms races.

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The grand bargain I propose is designed to capture the benefits of U.S. accommodation with China, while reducing its risks. China's concessions on its territorial and maritime disputes would communicate information to the United States about the limited extent of its aims, thereby reducing Washington's concern that its own concessions would encourage China to push the United States out of East Asia. In addition, resolution of these disputes would eliminate flash points that fuel regional military competition and crises that could draw the United States into a war.

#### The plan gets China to resolve disputes and agree to U.S. presence — it solves the root cause of arms races.

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Requiring Chinese Concessions

To reduce the potential risk to Taiwan, the United States should make ending its commitment to Taiwan contingent of two Chinese concessions. First, China must resolve its disputes in the South China and East China Seas on fair terms. This could include placing the disputed territories, some of which have valuable gas and oil reserves, under international control. Such action would not only eliminate dangerous flash points, but also provide evidence of China’s limited aims.

Second, China would officially accept the United States’ long-term security role in East Asia, including its alliances and forward-deployed forces. This would reflect the Chinese leadership’s willingness to incur the domestic political costs of confronting influential hard-liners who favor more ambitious Chinese policies in East Asia.

### They Say: “Plan Kills U.S. Credibility”

#### The plan doesn’t get rid of the *rest* of the U.S.’s China policy — it maintains credibility.

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A grand bargain would not constitute the entirety of U.S. policy toward China. Unilateral measures and alliances would remain essential components of U.S. policy. When uncertain about a state’s motives and goals, a state should pursue a mix of cooperative and competitive policies. In response to improvements in China’s forces, the United States should invest in maintaining the military capabilities [end page 2] necessary to protect its allies, to preserve those allies’ confidence in U.S. commitments, to deter crises and war, and to fight effectively if deterrence fails.

#### The plan allows the U.S. to strengthen its credibility *without* colliding with China.

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A grand bargain would not constitute the entirety of U.S. policy—unilateral measures and alliances would remain essential components of the United States' policy toward Northeast Asia. When uncertain about an adversary's motives or when facing a state with mixed motives—a combination of security seeking and greed—a state should pursue a mix of cooperative and competitive policies.107 Maintaining and enhancing U.S. commitments to the region would provide some of the necessary balance in the overall policy of the United States. These components of U.S. policy would be necessary and appropriate even if China were unwilling to make the types of concessions discussed above, but they would become even more important in the context of a grand bargain. The key challenge is for the United States to sustain its credibility for protecting its allies. As already discussed, to help accomplish this, the United States could commit additional forces to the region, forward deploy larger forces, invest more in overall U.S. military capabilities, and increase the integration of alliance military planning. These measures would provide the additional benefits of helping to offset increases in China's military power and to sustain the grand bargain by enhancing the U.S. ability to deter China from breaking the agreement. There is a potential downside, however: increased U.S. capabilities would likely appear threatening to China. But this danger would be reduced by America's ending its commitment to Taiwan because a U.S. buildup would no longer threaten this vital Chinese interest and would therefore be more clearly intended only to defend U.S. allies. If, however, China wants to push the United States out of the East Asia, then it would be strongly opposed to, and provoked by, these measures. In this case, though, given the priority that U.S. grand strategy places on preserving the United States' alliances in East Asia, increasing U.S. capabilities would enhance its security.

#### Nothing about the plan precludes other policies that maintain credibility.

Glaser 16 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2016 (“Grand Bargain or Bad Idea? U.S. Relations with China and Taiwan,” *International Security*, Volume 40, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via Project Muse)

An obvious rejoinder is that merely proposing a grand bargain would be risky for the United States and, therefore, its low probability of success makes it a bad policy option. The risks concern the potential damage to the United States’ credibility for protecting its interests. As I argue in the article, however, the United States could adopt a variety of policies that would largely preserve its credibility—among them, continuing to reinforce its alliance with Japan and to cooperate with other security partners in the region. Such options would be available to the United States while it pursued the grand bargain and even afterward, if the bargain was not attained.

### They Say: “Plan Gives China Military Advantages”

#### No military advantage link — the plan doesn’t increase China’s power.

Glaser 15 — Charles L. Glaser, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Fellow in the Kissinger Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, former Emmett Dedmon Professor of Public Policy and Acting Dean at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, former Strategic Analyst for the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2015 (“A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security*, Volume 39, Number 4, Spring, Available Online to Subscribing Institutions via MIT Press Journals)

A second potential threat to U.S. security is that territorial accommodation could reduce U.S. military capabilities. Although numerous analysts suggest that China's control of Taiwan would have this effect, little sustained analysis of this issue is publically available. One possibility is that U.S. accommodation would free up military forces and investments that China now commits to coercing and if necessary attacking Taiwan, which would in turn enable China to shift resource to better challenge the U.S. ability to protect the East Asian SLOCs and possibly beyond.82 According to this argument, because the Taiwan mission has absorbed the vast majority of the Chinese army's force modernization and organizational training,83 the resources made available for other missions would be large.84

This danger is smaller than critics suggest, however. If China decides to fully pursue more ambitious missions, it would have to make large investments that would likely dwarf the amount it is spending on Taiwan-specific missions. Consequently, whether China eventually gains control of Taiwan is unlikely to be decisive in determining China's ability to invest in efforts to control the South China and East China Sea SLOCs, and beyond. Related, it is likely that Chinese capabilities dedicated to Taiwan will eventually become so effective that Beijing will be able to reallocate some of its future military investment to other missions.85 Moreover, ending the U.S. commitment to Taiwan could reduce China's determination to pursue more challenging distant naval missions because the United States will not interrupt these SLOCs, except possibly during a severe crisis or major war. Eliminating the possibility of war over Taiwan would therefore greatly reduce Beijing's incentives to make investments in these missions. China could, however, pursue greatly expanded power projection capabilities for a variety of other reasons,86 including worst-case planning that imagines the United States will interrupt its SLOCs under even the most unlikely conditions, a Mahanian view of naval power that connects “commercial health with naval primacy,”87 or the belief that superpower status requires power projection capabilities.88 Finally, one should not exaggerate the security risks of being unable to fully control these SLOCs. The United States does not need to control the Strait of Malacca and the East Asian SLOCs to enable shipping to reach Japan during a war with China. Instead, bypass routes could allow shipping to reach oil ports on Japan's east coast.89 Also, the ability to deny China use of these SLOCs would be sufficient to preserve the U.S. ability to coerce China.

#### Control of Taiwan *doesn’t matter* for China’s A2/AD strategy.

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Taiwan's geographic location creates another possible military danger by giving China the opportunity to deploy its forces further forward.90 For example, Chinese control of Taiwan would provide China's navy more direct access to the open Pacific, which might increase China's power project capabilities.91 Chinese analysts identify the importance of Taiwan for enabling China to “break through” the barrier created by Japan, including the Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, and the Philippines.92 In a similar vein, Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes, of the U.S. Naval War College, argue: “Control of Taiwan … would allow the PLA to erect its own Great Wall at sea, giving Beijing some say over the exercise of foreign naval and military power in nearby seas and skies. … Analysts view Taiwan as the one geographic asset that can grant Chinese forces direct access to the Pacific. If the island is a guard tower in an offshore Great Wall, then its offensive value is unmatched.”93

Dissecting the strategic value of Taiwan requires assessing how Chinese control would influence China's ability to perform specific military missions. Available analyses provide little reason to worry that possession of Taiwan would significantly increase China's military reach or its ability to project power.94 Control of Taiwan would, however, enhance China's A2/AD capabilities by increasing its ability to send submarines into the Philippine Sea. Owen Coté explains that Taiwan plays an important role in enabling the United States “to form effective acoustic barriers through which Chinese [diesel attack submarines/guided missile diesel submarines] must pass in transiting” from the shallow waters along China's coast into the deep water of the Philippine Sea.95 This access is valuable because the United States plans to operate carrier battle groups in the Philippine Sea and Chinese diesel submarines would make these operations more difficult and riskier. The impact of losing this anti-submarine warfare barrier might not be large, however, because China increasingly has a variety of other ways to threaten U.S. carrier battle groups and undermine their effectiveness, such as antiship cruise missiles that can be launched from a diverse array of platforms (including guided missile diesel submarines), systems designed to counter U.S. space and cyber capabilities, and an emerging antiship ballistic missile capability.96 Nevertheless, U.S. carrier battle groups would experience some reduction in effectiveness.

### They Say: “China Will Break Deal In Future”

#### China won’t have the motivation to break the deal and U.S. deterrence solves.

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Commitment Problems and Bargain Breakdowns

One could argue that a grand bargain is of little or no value because China faces a commitment problem.108 According to this argument, as China becomes more powerful, the costs of reneging on the deal will decrease, making defection China's best option; recognizing this danger in advance, the United States should be unwilling to enter into a grand bargain. More specifically, this argument holds that China will eventually be much better able to reassert its claims in the South China and East China Seas, and to pressure U.S. allies to cut their ties to the United States, and therefore will pursue these more aggressive policies; consequently, a grand bargain is no better for the United States than are unilateral concessions.

This argument overstates the commitment problem. Whether China faces a commitment problem depends on its aims: if China's aims are limited and would be largely satisfied by U.S. accommodation, then China does not face a commitment problem; increases in China's power would not make breaking the agreement its best option. The barrier from the U.S. perspective is that China's aims are uncertain. Given this information problem, the United States would find itself uncertain about whether China faces a commitment problem. The more the United States believes it likely that China's aims go well beyond the terms of the grand bargain, the less attractive the grand bargain is as a long-term policy designed to respond to China's growing power.

If a grand bargain brought only risks and China was likely to break out of the bargain, then the United States should not pursue it. As I have shown, however, a grand bargain could bring a variety of benefits, including providing information about China's aims, which would reduce the likelihood of a commitment problem; communicating U.S. resolve to protect American interests; and possibly contributing to a Chinese domestic consensus on limited aims. In addition, as explained above, the United States should pursue policies that would contribute to preserving the grand bargain and reducing the costs if it fails, including maintaining military capabilities sufficient to protect its allies, which should help convince China that breaking the agreement would harm its interests. Because neither the ability of the United States to protect its allies nor its credibility for doing so would be significantly diminished by the grand bargain or its unraveling, and because China's goals could well be sufficiently limited that the United States does not actually face a commitment problem, the grand bargain has good prospects for increasing U.S. security.

## Election DA Answers

### Link Takeout/Turn

#### No Link and Turn — China doesn’t move the election needle, but voters overwhelmingly support the plan.

Thrall and Gomez 16 — A. Trevor Thrall, Senior Fellow in the Defense and Foreign Policy Department at the Cato Institute, Associate Professor in the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs at George Mason University, holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Eric Gomez, Research Associate for Defense and Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, holds an M.A. in International Affairs from the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, 2016(“The American Public Is Not Very Hawkish on China,” *Cato at Liberty*—the Cato Institute’s blog, June 9th, Available Online at <http://www.cato.org/blog/american-public-not-very-hawkish-china>, Accessed 06-30-2016)

Though China’s saber rattling in East Asia and the South China Sea hasn’t made a big splash in the 2016 presidential campaign so far, the question of how the United States should respond to China’s rising military and economic power is one of the most important foreign policy challenges the next president will face.

Both candidates have staked out aggressive positions on China. Trump has promised to impose steep tariffs on Chinese imports, suggested that South Korea and Japan should acquire nuclear weapons, and has called for a strong military presence in Asia to discourage “Chinese adventurism.” Clinton, for her part, was a lead architect of the “pivot to Asia” as Secretary of State, redirecting U.S. military and diplomatic efforts from the Middle East to Asia to confront China’s rise.

A close look at public opinion, however, reveals that although complex, the American public’s attitudes towards China are more sanguine than those of its fearful leaders.

To be sure, most Americans have always harbored concerns about the Communist nation and its intentions, and during difficult times Americans worry about the challenge China poses to their economic fortunes. But despite China’s aggressive campaign to modernize its military, and despite two decades of one-sided debate about the China threat, most Americans correctly continue to identify the United States as the stronger military power, and fewer than half view China’s military power as a serious threat (even fewer rate it a “critical threat.”)

Moreover, the prolonged fear mongering has failed to move the needle when it comes to how Americans feel about China. Gallup polls show a slight increase in China’s favorability rating among Americans between 1990 and 2016. And in 2014 the Chicago Council on Global Affairs found that just 48% of the public views China as primarily a rival and 49% see it primarily as a partner.

Most importantly, though, Americans overwhelming support a cooperative approach to dealing with China rather than a confrontational one. Sixty-seven percent responded to the 2014 CCGA poll that the best way to handle the rise of Chinese power is to “undertake friendly cooperation and engagement,” compared to 29% who said the United States should “actively work to limit the growth of China’s power.” And when it comes to the prospect of military conflict with China the public is truly not interested. Just 26% believe the United States should send troops to help if China invades Taiwan.

These figures provide fair warning to the next president to think twice about how to deal with China. An aggressive military posture like the one in place today (and promoted by both candidates) not only runs contrary to public preferences, it also increases the prospects for direct conflict between the United States and China.